

COLBURN'S
UNITED SERVICE
MAGAZINE

AND



Naval and Military Journal.

1847. PART III.

LONDON:
H. HURST, 27, KING WILLIAM STREET, STRAND.
SOLD BY ALL BOOKSELLERS.

**SIX WEEKS ON THE COAST OF BORNEO,
DURING THE OPERATIONS AGAINST THE SULTAN OF BRUNE IN
THE SUMMER OF 1846.**

BY AN OFFICER OF THE SQUADRON.

THE treachery of the Sultan of Borneo in the murder of the Rajah Muda Hassim and his brother Budrudeen with the whole of their families, and his total violation of the treaty entered into with Mr. Brooke on the part of the British Government during the summer of 1845, rendered it necessary that some severe punishment should be inflicted upon him, and that he should be taught that England permitted no breach of treaties with impunity.

Accordingly, a small squadron, consisting of the *Agincourt*, 74, Captain Hope Johnstone, bearing the flag of the Commander-in-Chief; the *Iris*, 26, Captain G. R. Mundy; *Ringdove*, 16, Commander Sir W. Hoste, Bart.; *Royalist*, 10, Lieutenant Reid; and *Spiteful*, steam-sloop, Commander Maitland; with the Honourable East India Company's steam-vessel *Phlegethon*, Mr. C. Ross, assembled at Singapore about the 14th June, 1846; having provisioned and received a large quantity of ordnance stores, the squadron, under the command of Rear-Admiral Sir Thomas Cochrane, sailed on the 19th instant for the Island of Borneo*. After a short passage it anchored on the 24th under Tangon Po, near the mouth of the River Morataba. The best anchorage is near the Cape in six fathoms, Cape Po bearing S.W. by W., Morataba Point S.S.W. Ships should not anchor too far to the eastward, there being a bank which runs out some distance, and the rise and fall being sixteen feet, a vessel drawing more than twelve feet would ground on it at low water. Shortly after anchoring, the *Phlegethon*, having on board the Commander-in-Chief and a party from the squadron, ascended the river to visit Mr. Brooke at the seat of his Government, Sarrawak. The river of that name joins the River Morataba eight miles above the entrance of the latter: it is picturesque, very thickly wooded, and the jungle growing close down to the banks, affords places of easy concealment to the Malays and their canoes. The *Phlegethon* anchored off the village of Sarrawak in the evening, and the party landed, and took up their abode at the hospitable mansion of the Rajah (Mr. Brooke), a very comfortable bungalow, having all the comforts of a European, combined with the luxury of an eastern, habitation. Sarrawak, now become the permanent residence of Mr. Brooke, the Rajah of the district, is about eighteen miles from the mouth of the Morataba; and ships drawing twenty feet of water can anchor off his house. The village, like all others built by Malays, is raised upon piles on the banks of the river, overhanging

* They were joined on the morning of the 23rd by the *Hazard*, Commander Egerton, which had lately been in the Bruné River; and Commander Egerton reported that a trap had been laid for him, to get him to the city, with the view of putting him to death; and that the Sultan was placing the city and banks of the river in a state of defence.

the water. Mr. Brooke has built a small casemate battery of 6 guns on the right bank, completely commanding the approach from the sea. He has planted the cocoa-nut and sugar-cane, and is clearing the jungle for the further progress of cultivation.

The antimony mines (which the merchants connected with the trade of Singapore have made the cause for such loud outcries against Mr. Brooke, and what they term his monopoly,) have as yet yielded little or no profit to him, who first undertook the working of them; but it is to be hoped now that they are rapidly improving, the man who has been at such an immense outlay, may in some measure meet with the reward of his labour and expenditure. Captain Henry Keppel's description of the village of Sarrawak is so correct and so complete, that it is unnecessary to add any further description of it in this place. It is quite delightful to observe the attachment of the natives to their newly adopted chief. Whilst at dinner, several of them came into the room, knelt down, and kissed Mr. Brooke's hand, afterwards retiring to benches prepared for them at the further end of the room. Several natives also lounged about the apartment apparently quite at their ease. It is the custom in this country for the people to enter the houses of the great, and walk in and out at their pleasure. They never steal; and Mr. Brooke says, that during the whole time he has lived at Sarrawak, he has never known an instance of robbery in his house. The Rajah has shewn an example which it would be well for every Englishman in the East to follow, that of accustoming himself to the manners of the people with whom he lives, and grafting upon them in that way the advantages of European civilization. By his kindness of manner, by his gallantry in the field, (which none respect more than Orientals,) and by his unflinching firmness and justice, he has won the hearts of all those under his rule; and thousands are daily flocking down to place themselves under the protection of his beneficent government. Long may he be spared to carry out his excellent and philanthropic views!

On the afternoon of the 25th, the Admiral, accompanied by Mr. Brooke, descended the river, visiting on their way a small Dyak village, which was not only curious but interesting. The village is formed of one building, the length of 180 feet by 45 broad, built upon piles in the heart of the jungle, and approachable only by canoes up a narrow stream of water. This building is divided lengthways into two divisions, one of which is portioned off as cabins or separate rooms, where a family eat, sleep, and live; the other divisions being a street, where they work and amuse themselves. The flooring of the village is bamboo set loosely on the beams, which makes it rather a service of danger to walk upon. The only ornaments with which the natives decorate this rude habitation, are the dried heads of their enemies killed in battle, which have a most disgusting appearance as they hang from the beams by their long hair. These are exhibited by them with great pleasure as valuable trophies. The men are a fine athletic race, wearing very long hair hanging down their backs, and no covering over them except a cloth about their middle. They are exceedingly well disposed towards Mr. Brooke, under whom they have fought upon several occasions during the operations against the Sakarran pirates, and have always exhibited great courage. The women have a pleasing

appearance; they are perfectly naked, with the exception of a loose cloth round their middle; they also wear numbers of brass rings round the waist, which are never removed. The party having taken leave of their Dyak friends, returned to the Phlegethon, when she immediately descended the river, and arrived at the anchorage at 9 in the evening.

On the morning of the 26th, the squadron weighed and proceeded to the eastward, anchoring occasionally on the coast. The Commander-in-Chief ascending several rivers in the Phlegethon, visiting different Dyak tribes who were supposed to be inimical to Mr. Brooke, but who, on the Phlegethon arriving off their villages, shewed anything but signs of hostility. The Admiral warned them that he should severely punish the slightest act of aggression towards Mr. Brooke, upon which they gave promises of eternal friendship, and assistance if required, to the Rajah.

The coast from Sarrawak to the Island of Labuan is very low, and the navigation dangerous; there are patches of coral reefs as far as ten and twelve miles from the land, with two and a half fathoms upon them. The Ringdove, whilst sounding a-head of the Admiral, went suddenly from seventeen to three fathoms: she immediately hauled off and found deep water. A good look-out should always be kept whilst sailing along this coast. On the 4th of July the squadron anchored between the Island of Labuan and the main in eight fathoms, Moaroo Point bearing S.W., Small Island N.W. The next day, Sunday, was employed in making preparations for ascending the River Bruné, and several experiments were tried for blowing up a boom which was said to run across part of the river, supposed to be similar to the one destroyed at Malloodoo by Captain Talbot in the previous summer. On Monday the Agincourt, Iris, and Hazard, towed by the Spiteful, anchored off Moaroo Point, at the entrance of the River Bruné, the Ringdove and Royalist having worked up to that anchorage. The Phlegethon proceeded up the river to reconnoitre the batteries; whilst on this reconnoissance, the boats of the flag-ship and Phlegethon dismounted, and spiked several guns lately placed in position on the Island of Cheriman. The Phlegethon returned to the squadron in the afternoon, without having observed any large body of Malays. In the evening a boat arrived from the city with a Chief, bearing a letter from the Sultan to the Commander-in-Chief, requesting that he would visit him, and complaining of the treatment he had received from Captain Egerton of the Hazard; but on Mr. Brooke examining the seal of the letter, he declared it a forgery. The Chief with his canoe were therefore detained on board the Agincourt. The Admiral having now made his dispositions, and everything being prepared, Captain Hope Johnstone of the Agincourt, and Commander Egerton of the Hazard were appointed to command the detachment of seamen small-arm men, Captain George Rodney Mundy the division of gun-boats, and Captain Hawkins, R.M., the marines. On the morning of the 7th of July, the Admiral having his flag in the Spiteful, with the Hazard and Royalist in tow, the Phlegethon a-head sounding, proceeded up the river as far as the Fort of Cheriman, where they anchored; the Phlegethon returning in the afternoon to the squadron off Moaroo Point for the small-arm men, marines, and boats of the squadron, and rejoining the Admiral at day-light on the 8th of July.

Upon her arrival, the *Spiteful* having the *Royalist* in tow, and preceded by the *Phlegethon* with the boats of the squadron, weighed and stood up the river. The proceedings of the force cannot be better described than in the public dispatches of the Commander-in-Chief.

Suffice it to say, that upon the forts opening their fire, the boats under the command of Captain Mundy immediately landed and gallantly stormed the batteries, the Malays flying in every direction. The *Spiteful* and *Royalist* anchored off the town of Bruné, and the *Phlegethon*, after sustaining the fire of the batteries at the head of the river, anchored and immediately took possession of them. The marines and small-arm men were landed, the former occupying the Sultan's house, which, as well as the city, had been totally deserted on the appearance of the squadron. On the 10th a force (consisting of detachments of small-arm men and marines,) was placed under the orders of that active and enterprising officer, Captain Mundy of the *Iris*, to attempt to secure the person of the Sultan, who had fled into the interior the day previous to the capture of the city. After five days of most indefatigable pursuit, and great privations and hardships, they were forced to return to their ships unsuccessful. Captain Mundy having marched fifty miles through a thick jungle to the Sultan's village, (which he found fortified but totally abandoned,) his guides having now deserted him, and deeming any further pursuit hopeless without them, took possession of several brass guns, burnt the village, and made the best of his way to Bruné. The inhabitants of the city seeing that no injury was intended them, now returned to their usual occupations, and soon began bartering bullocks and poultry with the squadron for English broad cloths, which they value much more than money.

The principal adherents of Hadji Sammin, (he having escaped,) who who were connected with the late attack upon the squadron, and the murder of Muda Hassim and Budrudeen, were then executed by order of those in power at Bruné, who afterwards deemed it a mark of respect to the Admiral to pass under the stern of the *Spiteful* with their creases presented, covered with the blood of their victims.

The Admiral, having issued a proclamation to the Sultan and inhabitants of the city of Bruné, descended the river on the 20th, in the *Spiteful*, with the *Royalist*, *Phlegethon*, and *Hazard*, and rejoined the squadron off Moaroo Point; the *Dædalus* had arrived in the mean time from Hong Kong, but too late to take any part in the operations. At daylight, on the 23rd of July, the squadron weighed, and sailed from Moaroo Point, anchoring in the evening off Victoria Harbour, Island of Labuan. The best anchorage is on the east side of the harbour, where a line-of-battle ship may anchor within a quarter of a mile of the shore, in six and seven fathoms, centre of Pulo Daut, bearing S.E. by E., the rock with trees, S.W., there is a dangerous sunken rock, with only six feet upon it in the middle of the harbour: it would be as well were a buoy now placed upon it. This is decidedly the best anchorage on the north coast of Borneo; protected from all winds, it will become (now that it is in our possession,) a most valuable harbour of refuge for ships disabled in the China Seas; it will insure to the native trader in those parts a sure protection against the pirate; and, by the constant appearance of English men-of-war in those waters, render the position

of the Sultan of Borneo and his subjects secure from irruptions of the piratical natives of the eastern coast; and will also open to our merchants, in the Indian Archipelago, a depôt for commercial intercourse with the interior of Borneo. Such are the principal advantages of Labuan as a British settlement. Wood and water are easily obtained; coal is to be found, but not in sufficient quantity for us to indulge the hope that it may be made available for our steamers. That intelligent officer, Commander Heath, late acting in command of H.M.S. Wolf, discovered a valuable seam of coal on the main land, near Moaroo Point, which may probably be turned to some account. Let us trust then that Labuan will prosper, and, with the energetic Brooke as its Governor, we feel sure it must.

The Commander-in-Chief having made a tour of the island, the squadron sailed on the 25th, and proceeded along the coast to the eastward. In the afternoon of that day, it anchored off Pulo Tega, and the Spiteful parted company, with dispatches and letters for Singapore. On the morning of the 27th they again sailed, proceeding along the coast, passing outside of Pulo Tega. The channel between the island and the main is far preferable to the outside one. Having no correct charts on board, and nothing but their lead to depend upon, the Ringdove, looking out one mile a-head of the Admiral, suddenly shoaled her water from twenty-two to ten, and then three fathoms. The helm was immediately put down, but, before she could be rounded to, she was on a coral reef, at least ten miles from the land. It was fortunate for the Agincourt that the Ringdove grounded, or she would have been ashore also, and probably the whole squadron; as it was, they were obliged to anchor, and sound for a passage. This coast is most dangerous; and it is very desirable that Sir Edward Belcher's charts of the Coast of Borneo should be issued as soon as possible to ships proceeding to the East Indies. The Ringdove, by the exertions of her officers and crew, was afloat, and under weigh, in two hours from the time of her striking, having sustained no injury. That evening the squadron anchored ten miles off the land, in twenty-two fathoms; sailed the next morning, and passing along a beautiful line of coast, anchored, at noon, off the River Mangaboong. The entrance to the river bears about S.S.E. from the anchorage. The Commander-in-Chief, with Mr. Brooke, ascended the river, where they found the natives well-disposed. Several canoes came out to the ships laden with cocoa-nuts, poultry, &c., which they bartered for broad-cloths.

Weighing on the morning of the 29th, and standing along shore to the eastward, the squadron came to in the beautiful and secure Bay of Amboong. Mount Keeney Balloo bearing S.E., third point S.W. This anchorage commands the best view of Mount Keeney Balloo, the highest mountain in Borneo, and remarkable for its striking appearance. The natives of this place are extremely well-disposed towards the English, for which they have suffered much ill-treatment from the Illinun pirates of Tampasook. In consequence of their having supplied Sir Edward Belcher with bullocks, in the spring of the year, the Tampasook pirates came down upon them, burnt their village, and drove all their cattle away, so that it was with difficulty that bullocks could be obtained for the use of the ships. After procuring a small supply of them, the squadron sailed on the 31st, and anchored, at noon,

on the same day, off the entrance of the River Tampasook, in six fathoms, Point Usokan bearing S.W. by W., Mantarmena N. by W. The signal was immediately made to hoist out, and man and arm all boats, and it was generally supposed to be the Admiral's intention to attack the village of Tampasook immediately. However, such not being the case, soon after anchoring, Mr. Brooke proceeded up the river to have an interview with the native Chiefs. During his absence, a large prahu was observed pulling up in shore; she was immediately taken possession of by the boats of the Phlegethon, and proved to be a piratical prahu, returning to Tampasook, with the body of a Pangeran (or Chief), for interment at his native place. From the evidence of a Spanish boy, who had been captured by these pirates, it appeared that this prahu was one of a flotilla of four, which had left Tampasook, about three weeks previously, for purposes of plunder. The crew were therefore placed in irons, and sent on board the Ringdove, for conveyance to Manila.

Mr. Brooke returned to the Agincourt in the evening; having been unsuccessful in obtaining any satisfactory explanations from the Chiefs, with respect to their conduct towards the people of Amboong. It was thereupon determined by the Admiral, that the place should be attacked and destroyed the following day. Accordingly, at noon, on the 1st of August, the boats of the squadron, under the command of Capt. Peter McQuhae, of the *Dædalus*, assembled round the Agincourt, and forming in two divisions, the gun-boats in advance, proceeded towards the mouth of the river. A large body of pirates had collected on the beach, while the boats were assembling; but seeing the determined manner in which they pulled into the attack, immediately dispersed. The boats entered the river without experiencing the slightest opposition, and proceeded for about two miles to the furthest extremity of the village; then the work of destruction began. Some of the boats were despatched down the river, with orders to set fire to the village in different places, and in five minutes this nest of pirates was enveloped in flames, and by 4, P.M., completely destroyed. No resistance was offered by them; they having totally abandoned their village, carrying away every thing of value. One division of boats now returned to the ships; the other division, with Capt. McQuhae, took up their quarters at a large hut, which had been spared in the conflagration. On the following morning, that active officer proceeded five miles higher up the river, burning and destroying the villages on its banks. Large bodies of Illinun made their appearance, flourishing their swords and spears, with most discordant howls and yells, but, considering "discretion the better part of valour," wisely kept completely out of musket range. This picturesque river is richly cultivated on both banks; the sugar-cane grows here in luxurious profusion, and large extent of paddy fields are to be seen in every direction. Yet, with all these bountiful gifts of nature, these misguided people (naturally a warlike race) prefer plundering their neighbours, and making slaves of their enemies, to the peaceful occupation of tilling their own land.

On the same day, the Commander-in-Chief, accompanied by Captain Mundy, proceeded in the Phlegethon to a river lower down the coast, where Captain Mundy burnt and destroyed another piratical village, which they found (as at Tampasook) completely deserted, with the exception of large flocks of goats and poultry.

The boats returned to their ships on the 3rd of August, and the squadron continued its progress to the north-eastward. The *Phlegethon*, that had been a most useful auxiliary to the squadron, from her light draught of water, and the activity of her intelligent Commander, now parted company for Amboong, and it must be gratifying to all in the squadron to know that Mr. Ross has received the reward of his services by the appointment of Harbour-Master at Singapore, a situation which he is so well calculated to fill. Sailing along the coast, two prahus were observed in the afternoon of this day, stealing along in shore, the signal was immediately made for the *Royalist* to chase. She proceeded as far in shore as she could with safety, and sent her boats in pursuit. The gig, under the charge of a Mid-shipman, being the fastest boat, came up quickly with one of the prahus, containing about forty men, well armed with spears and creases. Upon her being hailed by the Interpreter as to where she was going, a man in the prahu gave a most insolent answer, and commenced loading a rifle; seeing this, the gig, with only four men, besides Mr. Ray, pulled off a short distance; the pirates immediately let fly a volley of spears at her, but Mr. Ray, no ways daunted by the appearance of his powerful antagonist, kept up a steady fire with his four muskets, every discharge proving fatal to his opponents. They at last became so irritated at seeing their comrades fall at every discharge, that they jumped overboard, crease in hand, and in the bravest manner attempted to capture the gig, but the cool and determined gallantry of Mr. Parson and his boat's crew, were too much for them; they were nearly all slain, and the *Royalist's* other boat now coming to Mr. Ray's assistance, the pirates made the best of their way to the shore, where they saw that they had reached. The prahu was immediately taken possession of, and brought to the *Royalist*. This gallant affair which reflected great credit on Mr. Ray, was accomplished without the loss of a man, and without wounded.

The squadron anchored on the coast that evening, and the next day entered Malloodo Bay. About 4 o'clock, three boats were seen to anchor on the east side of the bay, at the same place where the *Ringdove* to chase. On observing the signal for the *Royalist* to chase, they hoisted their sails, and made off to the eastward, where the expedition. The *Ringdove* having at this time been ordered to draw water from fifteen to three fathoms, and the depth of the bay being down, she was on a coral reef, but proceeding to the edge, she drove over it into seven fathoms, when the anchor was cast, and she went to anchor. The boats hoisted out, and sent in chase, under the command of Lieut. Norcock. They returned at 12 o'clock, and were seen to be in the pursuit. The squadron had at the time anchored in the head of Malloodo Bay, and the *Admiral* sent a boat to proceed towards the boats of the squadron, to the place where they were engaged against Sheriff Housmann in the evening of the 27th. A few huts still standing on the beach, and the remains of a few deserted. The boom which had cost us so much trouble, and which it could be passed, was found lying on the beach, and the boat was left last year. An incident occurred on the 27th, which was of a serious character of the Malays, and how often it has happened, when engaged with these people, to disturb the peace of the

captured. The Ringdove having remained at anchor during the night of the day she was sent in chase, weighed on the following morning, and proceeded to rejoin the Commander-in-Chief. In working to windward three prahus were observed running along the land to the eastward. Sir William Hoste, suspecting them to be the same which he had chased on the previous evening, stood towards them, and when within a prudent distance of the shore hove-to, and again sent the boats away in chase, the officer in charge of them receiving strict orders to search the prabus, and if armed beyond what he considered necessary for their own defence to disarm them, and bring the prahu to the Ringdove. The boats succeeded in capturing one without any opposition, and she was brought alongside of the Ringdove (then at anchor in the bay) at about 8 P.M. On Sir William Hoste's giving orders for the crew to be brought out of the prahu, the Malays rose on the sentries placed over them, killed one, wounded two severely, thrust their spears through the Ringdove's ports, and desperately wounded Mr. Langtry, the Master, and a seaman, both of whom subsequently died of their wounds; the pirates at the same time cut the hawser by which they were secured, and attempted to make their escape, but the boats of the Ringdove were immediately sent after them, and soon succeeded in destroying the prahu, and the whole of the crew. Nothing could exceed the desperate gallantry of the Malays, they refused all quarter, and when the fire became too hot for them to remain in the prahu, they jumped overboard, and attacked the boats with their spears and creases, wounding two men in the pinnace. Mr. Langtry, after lingering ten days, in great suffering, died of his wounds on board the Ringdove, at Manila. In him the service lost a most promising and zealous officer; the rest of the wounded, with but one exception, died of their wounds at Hong Kong. Let this be a warning to all officers sent away in boats, never to trust Malays with arms. The Ringdove rejoined the Commander-in-Chief on the following day, and the squadron then sailed out of Maloodoo Bay.

On the 7th of August the squadron dispersed, the Commander-in-Chief, with the *Dædalus* and *Royalist*, proceeding to Hong Kong; the *Iris*, having on board Mr. Brooke, to Sarrawak, (visiting several places on the coast in their way); and the *Ringdove* to Manila.

Thus ended the second expedition under Rear-Admiral Sir Thomas Cochrane to the Island of Borneo, and the results prove that his exertions have not been in vain. The Sultan has been taught to feel and respect the power of England. The pirate, driven from his haunts, has been forced to follow the avocations of honest men. A fresh field has been opened for the commercial enterprise of our merchants in the East, and the philanthropist and Christian will view with pleasure a new road preparing for carrying civilization and Christianity into the centre of Borneo.

. For Rear-Admiral Sir Thomas Cochrane's Despatches we refer our readers to the Number of this Magazine for December, 1846.
