

GLIMPSES INTO
LIFE IN MALAYAN LANDS



GLIMPSES INTO
LIFE IN
MALAYAN LANDS

by

John Turnbull Thomson

with an Introduction and Annotations

by

JOHN HALL-JONES

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INTRODUCTION

Glances into Life in Malayan Lands describes the experiences of a young Englishman, John Turnbull Thomson, while working as a surveyor in Malaya (1838-1841) and afterwards as government surveyor to Singapore (1841-1853). Written some years later in New Zealand, he is reliving his years as a youth surveying in the hot, inhospitable jungle of Peninsular Malaya. Then only a lad in his teens his stories of crocodiles and tigers, and paddling up great rivers with only his Malay servant for company, read like some tales from an adventure book. Out of necessity, and also as an interest, he soon learned to speak the Malay language fluently and as the only non-official European in the area he probably had a closer contact with the Malays than any of his fellow countrymen. As he records in his book, 'I had free and unfettered access to the confidence and sympathies of the people.' A penetrating observer, his comments on the grievances of the Malays make interesting reading. Never one to be overawed by officials in high places, some of his observations are refreshingly frank. Indeed, so much so that he decided to publish.

this book anonymously and some of the targets of his criticisms are given disguised names. These names are elucidated in the chapter notes compiled for this reprint.

Born at Glororum Farm, near Bamburgh in the north of England, on 21 August 1821, Thomson went to school with the young Scotts and Browns whose families owned large estates on Penang. Visiting a 'respected elder relative' in Berwickshire, David Brown, who owned Glugor estate on Penang, he saw the idyllic paintings of the island by Captain Robert Smith and it became the Elysium of his boyhood dreams. After completing a course of mathematics at Aberdeen University, he sailed from England with a commission to survey the estates of Scott, Brown and Co., Penang. He was only a lad of sixteen when he left home.

After three months at sea he arrived in Singapore in July 1838 and carried on to Malacca and Penang, where he stayed initially with David Wardlaw Brown of Glugor, the son of his 'elder relative'. Here he met an old school friend, James Logan, who was to become famous as the founder of the *Journal of the Indian Archipelago* and to whom Thomson refers anonymously in this book (see notes). Thomson's stories of his first impressions of Penang, the dinner parties, and the excursions out into the countryside, are delightful and chatty and read like some tales from Somerset Maugham. After completing his survey of Penang, he crossed over to Province Wellesley on the mainland, where for the next three years he led a rough lonely life surveying in the jungle, often going for long periods without seeing a single fellow countryman. His stories of ascending the great rivers, where his boatman was once

whisked off his canoe by the tail of a crocodile and devoured, are full of danger and adventure. It was during this lonely period of his life that he got to know the Malays well and learned to converse freely in their language.

His map of Penang and Province Wellesley (not included in this reissue) attracted the attention of the Governor of the Straits Settlements and in 1841 he was appointed government surveyor to Singapore. Then aged only 21, his feet were planted firmly on the ladder to success. Singapore had been founded only a couple of decades previously (in 1819) and his descriptions of the young town and its personalities are important observations. By now he had also taught himself to paint, first in water colour and later in oil. Nowadays these pictures, painted with the eye of an architect, are a priceless record of the early town. Some have been reproduced in black and white in *An Early Surveyor in Singapore* (1980) and more recently in colour by Oxford University Press in *The Thomson Paintings* (1983).

Thomson remained in office as surveyor, engineer and architect to Singapore for a total of twelve years, during which time he produced a number of detailed maps of Singapore town, Singapore Island and Singapore Strait. He also constructed a number of buildings, bridges, and roads, including Thomson Road which is still a main highway leading across the island. It was during his great marine survey of Singapore Strait that he got to know the doughty Captain Samuel Congalton who did so much to suppress the pirate infestation of these waters and to whom Thomson pays a fine tribute in this book. Later Thomson was to have personal experience of these pirates during his lonely survey of the east

coast of the Malay Peninsula and the construction of the Horsburgh Lighthouse in Singapore Strait. The lighthouse was probably his greatest single achievement in the area, but after two years on the exposed Pedra Branca rock thirty miles out to sea his health broke down, which led to his final departure from the region. Sent home to England on sick leave, he was advised to seek employment in a more temperate climate. And so in 1855 he moved to New Zealand where he eventually became New Zealand's first surveyor-general.

It was in New Zealand that he compiled this book and became a prolific author. A second volume followed, *Sequel to Some Glimpses into Life in the Far East* (1865), written in a more serious vein. But probably his most remarkable effort was his book *Translations from the Hikayat Abdulla* (1874), written twenty years after he had left Malaya, in which he translates the autobiography of his former teacher of Malay, the renowned *Munsyi* Abdullah. He also contributed a number of articles to the *Journal of the Indian Archipelago* of which his *Account of the Horsburgh Lighthouse* (1852) is a classic of its kind. The lighthouse is still in use today and stands as a fine monument to his whole work in the region.

After three years in office as surveyor-general, Thomson retired to Invercargill, where he died on 16 October 1884 in the fine mansion, Lennel, which he had designed himself and which is still lived in by one of his great grandsons.

Invercargill
February 1984

John Hall-Jones

SOME GLIMPSSES

INTO

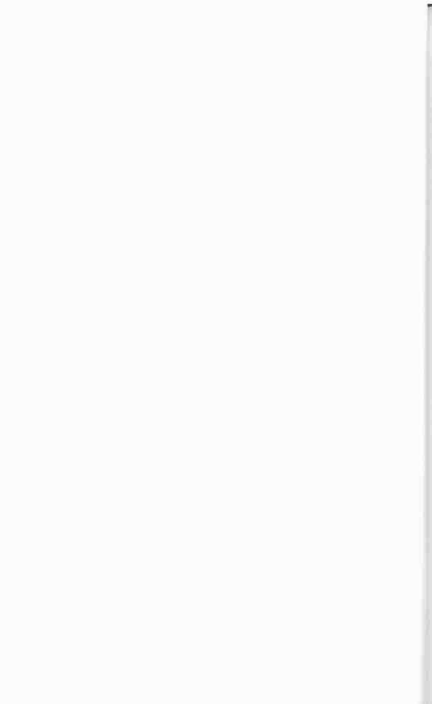
LIFE

IN THE

FAR EAST.

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1864.

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P R E F A C E

I HAD long left the regions in which the incidents related in this work took place. I sought out other and distant spheres of action and enterprise, and I became engaged in projects and pursuits totally disconnected with the tenor of my former life. Notwithstanding the absorbing nature of my new avocations, I never forgot the Far East, for it was the arena on which my early life-dreams were founded ; the scene of my early struggles and the source of many reminiscences, whether of joy or sorrow.

The ties that bound me to the Far East, it is true, had been entirely severed ; yet I cast many a fond remembrance back to the friends I had left behind me, and often were my wandering thoughts conveyed to the spots endeared to me by the associations of early manhood.

The time at length came when leisure was given me. The long winter nights of the temperate zone

were dull. My wife must sometimes be engaged in the duties of the household, and the grey cat purring on the rug was no company after the young folks had retired. In this dilemma I was looking over the advertisements of a magazine, and a strange yet familiar word attracted my attention. It was a most unusual word—a word of no uncommon length, but it struck me to the very heart. The word was "*Quedah*." I started as if I had seen the ghost of my old Malay friend "Oamut." Who can write about *Quedah*, or as I write it "*Keddah*?" I looked again; it was "*Quedah*," by Captain Sherard Osborn, R.N.¹ Osborn, I reflected; can this be the little midshipman who used to be in gunboat No. 3, commanded by Jadee? I must write at once to my bookseller, and see what *young* Osborn has to say about my old Malay haunts. I beg his pardon, I see he is now "C.B.," and an "*Officier de la Legion d'Honneur*."

The book duly came by post, with the old Cornhill stamp on it. I rolled my arm-chair close to the fire, ordered the children off to their beds, and finished every syllable of Osborn, even to the risk of a curtain lecture—happily few and far between. "QUEDAH" rolled up old memories. My old Malay acquaintances flickered before my mind's eye like phantasmagoria. I felt myself paddling up the Juru again with Oamut, Doih, Abraim, and Yusof. I thought, "Young Osborn had more in him than I gave him credit for. He has written a most

spirited and interesting book about his adventures on Malayan *waters*. The winter nights are long; why should I not write another book about Malayan *lands*?" No sooner thought than begun. I proceeded to my self-imposed task.

I have been too long separated from the *dramatis personæ* to have other than *systems* to deal with. The actors and incidents transpired nearly thirty years back. In what I have related, therefore, I have only one object in view—viz., to give an illustration of the Far-Eastern social system as I found it. Incidents cannot be related without having persons to speak and act for you. So when I have had to dilate on private persons and events, the names, dates, and places have been so changed as to exclude the possibility of trespassing on confidence. When the public acts of public men are reviewed, I have been less tender. When I write regarding the avarice, venality, or ridiculous impropriety of public men, the names attached to the parties are fictitious. All are long ago dead and gone, so the feelings of innocent and surviving friends must be respected. This has been the disagreeable part of my undertaking; but I felt my illustrations would not have been complete without it. If any now living should take my critical sketches to themselves, let them look back thirty years, and they will not fail to detect one or two other individuals to whom the sketches are equally applicable. It is always more agreeable to praise

than to blame ; and if some of those whom I have mentioned with respectful admiration be yet living, I trust they will forgive my audacity.

If this first volume be deemed worthy of public attention, then I will bring out the second, which is nearly ready for the press. But I await the verdict.

With the above remarks, I now offer my winter's work to the discerning public.

THE AUTHOR.

London, Jan. 1864.

1. Captain Sherard Osborn RN, CB., author of *Quedah or Stray Leaves from a Journal in Malayan Waters*. London. 1857. Osborn's book survives amongst Thomson's collection in New Zealand and Thomson has obviously used it as a model for his own book which has a very similar format.

2. London. 1864: perhaps another example of the author's 'cover up'. Thomson wrote this book from his house in Dunedin, New Zealand, while he was serving as Chief Surveyor from the Province of Otago.

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SOME GLIMPSSES INTO LIFE

ix

THE FAR EAST

CHAPTER I.

THE STRAITS OF SUNDA.

TOWARDS the end of June, 183—, the gallant barque C—, of G—, was bounding over the waves, borne by favourable and gentle gales. We had been three months out of sight of Old England, and were now expecting to see the land of our destination. The captain and I were in the fore-top-gallant yard for hours, in the hope of sighting the mountain tops. All was anxiety, after so long a voyage. Our fellow-passengers, by overstraining their eyes, imagined that they saw land long before we did; yet Christmas Island was first descried from the mast-head long after they had persuaded themselves that they had seen it from the deck. Belief is often the offspring of desire. How lovely did the woody slopes and sandy beaches of that lonely isle appear to us as we sped past it on our way to the far-famed Java! A restless night suc-

ceeded, and the evening of the next day found us under the lee of Sunda. The rolling waves subsided to a dead calm; and, late in the evening, the ripple of the land wind was observed to be approaching. Suddenly the Scotch terrier was seen running sniffing along the weather bulwarks. Its delicate scent had detected the aromatic gale of India about which I had so often read, and which I now began to inhale with satisfaction and delight.

We lay down that night in our berths intensely longing for the scene that was to open out upon the morrow. Yet it was full daylight, and the glorious tropical sun had appeared far above the horizon before I awoke. So when I came on deck he was illuminating, with his golden rays, the forest-clad mountains of Java, and tinging with rich purple the exuberant vegetation of the shores and valleys. The waters were as calm as glass; now no longer of the hue of the deep blue ocean, but of the brownish-green of shallow seas. We had entered the portal of the Indies, and lay abreast of Anjier. Shall I attempt a description of the scene? I fear it is of little use. Certain it is that this morning in the Straits of Sunda often recurred to my memory as the most brilliant I had ever witnessed.

The mountains of Java, the islands of the straits, and the more distant land of Sumatra, all covered with luxuriant tropical vegetation,—the mists rising from the valleys bringing out the foreground with distinctness,—the great beauty and gracefulness of

the groves and clumps of tall palm trees—the lazy blue smoke of the villages in the bays—the fantastic forms of the native vessels—the tall white sails of the European Indiamen, and the square tautness of the Dutch men-of-war—all these, under the balmy, soothing, and mysterious influence of an Eastern sky, riveted our searching yet unsatisfied gaze.

But another source of attraction soon appeared. Tens, twenties, and fifties, of small canoes are seen putting off from the shore. When distant, the effect of the raised arm and paddle on each side is most curious. On they come, in their tiny crafts, racing, with the swiftness of fishes, and the mirth of children. We are soon surrounded. The older sailors of our crew, communicate, in a jargon known to themselves, and, apparently, understood by the natives. That jargon is a compound of Portuguese, Bengalee, and Malay, and soon effects its desired end. Confidence is established; and we are surrounded by a new world and new things of the most varied and comprehensive description. First the Javanese—copper-coloured, small-featured, well-modelled, and often handsome, at other times monstrously ugly—his teeth dyed black and filed into the form of those of a saw—a roll of tobacco between his lips, a handkerchief bound round his head, and a *sarong* round his loins. He is nature's child, and she has made him a gentleman, soft in manners, elastic in gait, easy in conference. But what has he brought with him? Strange things,

too varied to enumerate. Bright plumaged birds in bamboo cages, fowls with black bones, cats with knobs instead of tails, shaddocks as large as a child's head, bananas, cocoa-nuts, fish, ducks, apes, monkeys, &c., &c. The chatter and clatter, the joking and chaffing, the bargaining and selling, the babylon of tongues — all served to dispel grave thoughts. Wonder and curiosity gave way to mirth and familiarity; and, ere evening came on, we were learned in the commodities of Sunda, and no doubt could have enlarged freely on the various topics of that day to friends we left behind us, had our steps been homeward again.

1. June 1838. Thomson was born on 21 August 1821, so would still be aged 16 in June 1838.

CHAPTER II.

BATAVIA.

THE capital of Netherlands India was well known to me through the writings of Captain Cook, Crawford,¹ and Windsor Earle. The impressions of it I had derived from these authorities were by no means favourable. So deadly and frequent were its fevers said to be, that the harbour had earned the name of "the white man's grave." The knowledge of this hung as a dreary incubus on my spirits, during the whole voyage; and many were the misgivings I had, when I learned that we were to remain here a month. However, as humanity can prepare itself for hanging, so we prepared our minds to undergo the ordeal of a month's continuance in the dreaded place. The countless islands—some of which were clothed with verdure, and beautiful to behold—were pointed out as we passed them, and said to be peculiarly liable to malaria. When anchored amongst the shipping, all that we could discern was a low tower and some red tiled roofs, hidden behind a low fringe of scrub,

stretching for miles along the margin of the calm waters. There were mountains in the interior, but the haze lifted only once during our sojourn to display them. Batavia, from the harbour, appeared as dismal as our preconceived notions had led us to anticipate.

On stepping on shore at the "Booms," some interesting reflections were called forth. Now we had reached the fabled "East," renowned in Arabian tales,—the boundary of the Venetian world,—the mysterious "Java Major" of Marco Polo, a region unknown to the Greeks or Romans—popularly known to the modern British as the island of the "deadly upas tree." Strange land, land of the aromatic spices, the nutmeg, and the clove. Land from whence came sugar, coffee, sago, and rice. A land through which alone could the curious Japan ware be obtained.

We pulled up a long canal, infested by alligators and crowded with grotesque native craft. The natives, in their curious costumes, squatted lazily on the decks, or, if engaged in boating, kept time, as they rowed along, to shrill and incoherent songs. Each verse ended with a howl—loud, vigorous, yet majestic. Hence the Javanese have obtained the name of "sea-dogs" from the Malays.

As we entered the city, new and unaccustomed objects arrested our attention; such as the native soldier, barefooted, keeping watch at the portal—the rows of whitewashed, red-tiled, old-fashioned

looking buildings; the large-leaved plantain; the tall stems of the cocoanut and betelnut-trees, rising far above the houses, and shading the streets with their immense bunches of feather-like leaves. Then there were also the diversified costumes of the different nations;—the sombre-clothed Malay and Javanese, the white-jacketed European, the loosely-dressed and bald-pated Chinese, the green-robed and yellow-turbaned Arab, the white, blue, red and orange-clothed Hindostanee. Each, in turn, attracted the notice of the uninitiated.

At length we arrive at the merchant's office. We gaze around, as our captain introduces his bills-of-lading to the inspection of the head of the firm. How pale and emaciated do the European assistants appear! Yet they assure us that they are in good health. How yellow and sunken are the eyes of that quondam Lowland farmer! Our first impressions made our hearts sink within us; the Far East being our destination for many long years.

We were taken to the Resident's office, to obtain leave to remain six weeks in Batavia. The non-compliance with this ceremony subjects us to a fine of 500 francs—(why should the Dutch be afraid of us?) We pass along many rows of dark-complexioned little officials, and wonder how they are able to exact so much from free-born, full-grown Englishmen. We succumb, and pass the ordeal. At length we stand before the great man, who sits in a dark room with green blinds to his windows.

He is deferential and polite ;—our self-esteem revives,—and we feel thankful, bow, and retire.

Now we call a carriage drawn by two little ponies. We drive through the dusty streets, though we invite suffocation. Yet the drive is charming. Porticoed and piazzaed, house after house is passed. The thatched dwellings of the natives are gone by ; and now we stop before the palace of Veltevreden. Evening comes on, and out pour all classes of the inhabitants. The Dutch paterfamilias, with his charming daughters, parades the verandahs, or lounges along the canal banks. Here European Holland is reproduced. The band performs, and military men on their chargers prance around the plain. The wealthy civilian, with his delicate white lady, dashes past in his carriage and pair. The merchant-tradesman and the ship-master emulate the latter, often accompanied by their copper-coloured, dark-eyed, black-haired mistresses. Batavia proved to be as Crawford had described it.

We are carried to the hospitable roof of the ship's consignee, and we find it to be a stately mansion of the pure Doric order. We alight and ascend steps of marble, and proceed along galleries of white marble. We are introduced to the lady of the house ;—she is dressed in white, as if for a marriage or a ball. We are offered sherry and bitters ; then ere long we withdraw to the dining-hall. This is open to the air on three sides, and the cool land-breeze wafts its grateful perfume across our burning cheeks.

The hum of myriads of insects fills the air. Every dish on the table is covered with a gauze covering, only to be hastily taken off and replaced again. Soup, fish, joints, curries, puddings, fruit, and wine are discussed. Native servants crowd around to watch each motion—to minister to each desire. Our host and hostess charm us with their urbanity, gentleness, and true good feeling. Our first impressions alter, and our hearts expand. Coffee succeeds dinner, and time is beguiled in conversation, or at billiards. At 10 o'clock we retire, in that soothed disposition which is best enjoyed after periods of doubts, misgivings, or over-excitement.

After 10, the *tokay* most likely makes acquaintance with the stranger. It is a house-lizard, whose voice and single note is almost human.

Familiar, by the descriptions of Crawford, with the licentious habits of the Batavians, and confirmed in the truth of the same by the passing scenes of the day, I was startled at the view of the couch that had been assigned me. It stood in the room over an outhouse, detached from the main building; and in such a position was well suited for intrigue. There lay a figure—long and slim—in the centre of the bed. I started,—for I was yet guilty of being modest. The figure lay motionless. This gave me courage, and I glanced again. It was deadly still.—Could it be human? My thoughts reverted to the lady of the house—her high-toned virtue and dignity, I felt annoyed at my suspicions. I ad-

vanced, and, removing the coverlet, to my amusement and relief found the cause of my perturbation to be a snow-white bolster, laid lengthways in the bed! What was its object, next morning's conversation enlightened me. The longitudinal bolster is an essential portion of bed-furniture, used by the old residents to allay the pangs of indigestion with which they are habitually troubled;—and in after years I also came to know its value.

1. John Crawford, the eminent East India Company official and orientalist, was Resident at Singapore from 1823 till 1826. His classic *History of the Indian Archipelago* was published in three volumes in 1820. Windsor Earle was another versatile servant of the Company whose book on the region, *The Eastern Seas*, was much quoted in its day.

CHAPTER III.

THE LAST PLUNGE.

At the end of July we were abreast of *Pulo Tayo*, at the south-west extreme of the China Sea. I shall ever remember it, with its steep wooded sides, rising as a cone out of the sea. The wind blew fair, and our voyage was agreeable; but deep gloom pervaded each countenance; there was much sickness, and one of our number was about being launched into the deep.

The month that we lay in the roads of Batavia had its usual consequences,—half the crew were laid up with fever, and three of them died. The first of these was now about to receive a sea-burial abreast of Pulo Tayo. Pulo Tayo has always had a gloomy aspect to my recollection, as it stands a monument of the scene now enacted.

The deceased sailor had been known as the strongest man on board; and, as I now scanned his pallid face, passive and immoveable, turned heavenwards, I read my first lesson in the weakness of humanity, and the uncertainty of our earthly

tenure. The body was wrapped in cloth by the sailors, the feet were shotted, and the corpse was stretched on a board covered by the Union Jack. The board was laid resting on the gangway. All those capable of being present stood around, while our Scotch captain read to his Presbyterian crew, the touching and affecting burial service for the dead as contained in the Prayer-book of the English Church. This he did with humble and reverent tones. At the conclusion of the service, the board was raised, and the body plunged into the sea. The waters gurgled over our late fellow-voyager, the vessel sped on her way ; and no trace remained of the spot at which one honest fellow had been consigned to his long home.

Our second mate was the next victim—a stout young man of plethoric habit, and lugubrious disposition. On the voyage out, I often used to accompany him in his watch, when the turn of his conversation would always be towards the melancholy. He was fond of *spinning a long yarn*, and these yarns were dismal, sickly, and depressing. His last voyage had been to Demerara, where he had been in hospital for six weeks. The whole of his companions had died of yellow fever and *black vomit*. He would relate minutely the ghastly details of the fevered and deadly couches of his companions ; and he rose to a kind of eloquence when describing his own sensations. The Guinea trade of Africa was also a fertile subject of conver-

sation ; and Batavia, with all its horrors, gave a zest to his narrations,—pleasurable, apparently, to him, appalling to our raw inexperience. As a Malay tells tales about tigers, when we are passing through their tracks, so did he not abate a jot of pungency in his sad and sickening particulars.

While lying in the harbour, I slept in my cabin out of the draught ; he, poor fellow ! had his bunk in the round-house, heated by the fierce rays of the sun. It was unbearable. He consequently slept on deck, exposed to the night air and miasma. This I believe to have been the cause of his premature death. A fellow-passenger exposed himself in the same way, as did many of the crew, and he and they were all taken ill of fever.

Our feeble old cook was the next victim, and he and the second mate were buried in Singapore churchyard,—a beautiful and romantic resting-place, sloping towards the harbour on the eastern face of Government Hill.¹ On returning to Singapore, after some years' absence, I sought the graves of my fellow-voyagers, but there was no mark nor sign to denote where the C——s had been buried.

1. Government Hill is now known as Fort Canning Hill.

CHAPTER IV.

SINGAPORE.

"SINGAPORE ahoy!" exclaimed the man at the mast head as the white houses and shipping rose above the horizon while we were abreast of the large red cliffs. We hailed the "Queen of the East" with no small pleasure, for we felt we were about to be relieved from the sorrows of the last month. We soon ran up to the shipping and anchored in British waters. How delightful the change from Batavia Roads! How striking the contrast! In the foreground, busy canoes, sampans, and tongkangs bore their noisy and laughing native crews about the harbour. The stately "Hyacinth" showed the pennant amongst numbers of English merchantmen. Hundreds of Chinese junks, and Malay prows, lay further in shore. Behind these, stretched a sandy beach, glistening in the sun, and overhung by the graceful palm trees, the glory of Singapore planters. In the centre of the landscape was Government Hill, with its verdant lawns and snug bungalow; and at its base were the ware-

houses and mansions of the merchant princes. Behind these was to be seen the comely undulating background, alternately covered with the mighty forest trees, and gambier and pepper gardens.

The tallness of the forest trees standing alone, or in clumps on the half-cleared hills and islands, gave a majesty to the scenery that I have observed nowhere else. The forest trees in thus rising into the atmosphere upright and in full verdure on the very tops of the hills, proclaimed that they flourished in a clime characterized by serenity and repose.

We landed, next morning, with the captain; and bade him good-bye. I left the captain to seek for a friend whose worth, gentleness, charity, and disinterested benevolence are widely known over the "Far East." All who had the good fortune to enjoy his acquaintance, will bear witness that these were the attributes of the late Captain William Scott.¹

My stay in Singapore was short. I sailed that same evening for Penang, so my impressions were few and hasty. The Europeans seemed hearty and robust, good-humoured and hospitable. Well do I remember Coleman's² ready joke and smart repartee. The little Malay boys who ply in the creek, have attracted the notice of all voyagers. So also have the bustling scenes on the Boat Quay, and Circular Road; for these are frequented by a mixed population intent on their various occupations. Here is a conglomeration of all eastern and western nations.

Subjects of nations at war are friendly here, they are bound hand and foot by the absorbing interests of commerce. The pork-hating Jew of Persia embraces the pork-loving Chinese of Chinchew. The cow-adoring Hindoo of Benares hugs the cow-slaying Arab of Juddah. Even the Englishman, proud yet jolly, finds it to his interest to unbend, and associate with the sons of Shem, whether it be in commerce, in sports, or at the banquet.

The long rows of piazzas, the whitewashed buildings covered with tiles, the low but cool and comfortable bungalow, the princely mansions in the suburbs, the fine esplanade, the umbrageous *arsena* trees³ and the tall *ru* trees, were each the subject of remark in turn. But I need say no more at present as my steps will be directed towards Singapore again.

1. Captain William Scott was Harbour Master at Singapore. See also Chapter XI.

2. George Dromgold Coleman, Superintendent of Public Works in Singapore, who designed a number of prominent buildings in the early town.

3. From Thomson's description of this 'umbrageous' tree, he is obviously referring to the *angsana* tree.

CHAPTER V.

THE MALACCA CAPTAIN.

I AWOKE after a sound sleep, having laid down upon a hencoop. There was no fear of miasma in the roads of Singapore. I had taken my passage in a small brig bound for Penang, but could not obtain cabin room till we had arrived at Malacca, which, at this season (August), is a day's sail from Singapore. The cabin of the little brig had no closed berths; and our skipper had his wife on board; so this was the cause of my exclusion.

After rubbing my eyes, I found we were running close past the Rabbit and Coney, which is the most picturesque locality of the straits; for here, numerous green islands, covered with pine-apple gardens, surrounded us on all sides. The alternate mangrove bushes and glittering sands fringed the islands, against whose sides lapped the sky-blue waters, breaking in silvery spray.

Our little brig was what is called a country vessel, and she traded only to the neighbouring settlements. Her aspect differed much from the one I had left.

The decks were roughly planked, the sides were weather worn, the masts were unscrapped, all had a slovenly appearance, but what did that matter? The hatches even were open,—a proof that much care was unnecessary as there were no storms to put us on our mettle. The captain was of Dutch extraction, and spoke broken English, but appeared better at home in Malay and Hindostanee. His lady spoke so much less English than himself and so much more Malay that I had some difficulty in understanding her. The crew were Bengalese, and there were besides a number of native passengers. One, a Surat merchant, occupied the long boat, where he sat all day chewing bruised rice and smoking a hookah. He wore a low-crowned hat of coloured check, which had no brim, and he was clad in white cotton robes, flowing down to his feet. He sat cross-legged, easy, contented, happy—a type of his race! The other noticeable passengers were Klings,¹ from the Malabar coast. These were nearly naked, and squatted on the deck for hours, scrubbing their teeth with short sticks. The Surat merchant had an olive-coloured complexion, and was fat and flabby. The Klings and Bengalese were deep bronze, lean and lanky.

After a refreshing wash, we sat down to breakfast, which was placed on a deal table fixed on the deck. An awning was drawn over us, and we thus enjoyed the luxury of the gentle gales now wafting us along. The breakfast consisted of rice and fish curry, to

which simple diet, though new to me, I did ample justice. The breakfast was served up by a Javanese man-servant,—short, copper-coloured, dark-eyed, black-haired, and black-toothed. Their reason for having the teeth black is that dogs have white ones! His dress consisted of a sarong only, being bare-footed, bare-legged, and bare-bodied, *i.e.* above the waist. No uneasiness was felt on the part of the lady. She had been accustomed from her infancy to look on nearly naked natives. Our skipper talked of the Javanese as a very good boy, very honest, and not given to cheating. The last characteristic I thought it strange to hear mentioned, as I had not been accustomed to hear of servants cheating. The broad good-humoured face of the Javanese showed that DEEN was all that had been said of him.

After breakfast, I lounged on the hencoop, watching the motions of my new shipmates. It was Sunday, and our captain was a religious man. He brought out a large Dutch Bible, and laid it on the table. This he read attentively, at times making devout remarks in his best English. I was edified at first, but, ere long, was disconcerted. There soon appeared an idiosyncrasy in his conduct that rudely expelled Sabbath-day thoughts. At intervals of five and ten minutes, he would start up in a rage at his crew, bringing forth a volley of oaths and abuse that frightened me, but that had not the slightest effect on them. He would then sit down to his

Bible again, and continue his pious exercises. I did not then understand the anomaly—but afterwards, by residence in the country, having got initiated into the mysteries of the Indian social system, I could then unwind it. I may now explain a little. Europeans in the East have to speak two languages, —their own to their countrymen, the native language to their servants. When they speak to the former they are accustomed to use the polished tone that obtains in good society, when they speak to the latter, it is for the purposes of commanding a weak and lethargic race—the general tone is consequently foul, overbearing, and depraved. So much does custom become second nature, that I have known ladies to indulge in the practice without themselves appearing to be aware how ill it sounded from such lips.

On this my first entry into Anglo-Indian society, I looked on the captain's movements with astonishment. To attempt to describe them would be profanity. Suffice it to say that Bengalese words mixed up with English oaths flew out of his mouth with great volubility, but little of which I could then understand. I only noticed that when he applied the word *soor* (pig), to his native boatswain that functionary's self-complaisance would be hurt, on which he urged on his Lascars by the ropes-end, using at the same time words even more atrocious than those of his white master. Here was one European amongst thirty natives doing what would

have created a mutiny in an English ship before five minutes were over; but things settled down to their usual listless and soothing routine, and the captain went back to his Bible. It required but little observation to see that the *natives were sunk into the lowest state of degradation, and that their commander's moral perceptions had been considerably blunted*. The relations between himself and his crew were fixed and settled; both were habituated to the system, and the crew would not work under any other—at least so thought our captain.

Our fare on board was very simple. Rice, fowls, and water,—succeeded by water, fowls, and rice, so that before the voyage was ended at Penang, I was taken seriously ill. The fare of the C—— was generous—beef, mutton, potatoes, biscuit, porter, ale, and wine partaken of with moderation—and was no bad diet to maintain a growing system. The sudden transition to rice and pure water, however much approved of by teetotallers, did not appear to agree with my constitution.

1. 'Kling' was the standard term in the nineteenth century for Indians from southern India, but today has acquired a somewhat derogatory sense and is seldom used.

CHAPTER VI.

MALACCA.

WE arrived off Malacca on the second morning, and dropped anchor after breakfast. In approaching the roads, we passed through hundreds of fishing boats, manned by Malays and Indo-Portuguese. The fishermen held in their hands a bow strung with shells, which they rattled in the water at a great rate. The object of this of course was not to frighten away the fish, but to attract them. The philosophy of this I never had explained to me, further than that it has been a practice from time immemorial. Malacca is the Brighton of the Singapore Chinese. To this place they come to spend their holidays,—to eat the luscious fruit so abundant in the place,—to indulge in recreation and repose from the mercantile anxieties of the great emporium. Malacca has declined from its former greatness under the Malay, Portuguese, and Dutch rulers. Indeed, excepting in the remains of a great ruined fort, no vestige exists to tell what the place once was.

Malay tradition would have it that under native

rajahs the town continued in a line of houses from Tanjong Kling to Tanjong Tohor. This could not have been so. An explanation of the tradition may be found in native fondness for hyperbole. The town, as it appeared from the roads, consisted of a row of dingy red-tiled houses, much overshadowed by cocoa-nut trees. In the centre rose a low grassy hill, on which the ruins of a Portuguese church¹ stood. In the interior were ranges of low wooded hills, over which again towered out Gunong Ledang and the mountains of Rumbowe.² Gunong Ledang is a tall peaked mountain, and is known to Europeans as Mount Ophir.

We landed at an attap shed, and I proceeded with my introductions to a gentleman residing in the settlement. He was an "East Indian," or "*country-born*" gentleman, which terms are preferred to that of "half-caste," a term held to be opprobrious in this part of the world. My friend having been educated in Europe, in polite circles, received me in a generous, warm-hearted, and polished manner, which commanded my profound respect and gratitude.

My friend carried me out to his country seat, two or three miles from town. He drove a hooded gig, drawn by one of the smartest and handsomest little ponies I had ever seen. The breed is Sumatra, and is most valuable to the residents of the straits. The first part of the drive was through the musty, close, and odorous China-town; but, that passed, we

entered into avenues of tall areca and cocoa-nut trees; thence we skirted the open plain, covered with rice plots. Now we entered orange, *duku*, *lamsat*, and *durian* groves. Then we passed through rice fields; at length we rise and wind round a grassy knoll, on whose top was set the capacious cool and snug bungalow of my friend.

Lunch is spread in the verandah, open to the glorious sea breeze; the prospect is charming, commanding as it does the expanse of rice fields, fruit, and palm groves. Beyond these are the straits of Malacca, blue and joyful with gentle zephyrs. Here is a charming locality and delightful climate, calm, dreamy, and soothing. But inexorable time speeds. I am introduced to the lady of the house, and we sit down to the table.

Grilled fowl, ham, and sweet potatoes, wine and pale ale, are first discussed. Then the course is removed, and cheese succeeds. At length the cream of the banquet is placed on the table. This is the fruit—pumaloes, oranges, plantains, and dukus. The pumaloes and plantains I thought delicious, the duku fascinating, but my friend said that he had reserved the best for the last. He informed me that Malacca was famed in the east for its fruits, which were to be had in high perfection and great variety. He counted over to me no less than forty-nine species of plantain; “but here,” he said, “is the king of fruits. There is no fruit in the world that can compete with this. Our people take

voyages of hundreds of miles to partake of it. The kings of Burmah have fast-sailing packets to carry it 500 miles that they may taste the valued luxury. Ay! here it is," continued my host: "the boy brings it." I look and see a rough-looking substance full of yellow yokes or seeds borne forward to the table. But what is this odour? I looked about me furtively, and my friend smiled. I took a momentary glance at the lady, and she laughed outright. 'The fruit is placed on the table. Shades of Cloacina! what is this? I give a piteous glance to my host: he laughs immoderately. I look at the contents of the fruit dish, and learn that the atrociously foetid odours come from it. My host resumes his equanimity, and sees it is no use to ask me to partake. I would have held my nose did good breeding allow it, but I resigned myself to my fate, and looked on. My host proceeded to open up the disgusting entrails of the horrid-looking vegetable, and they send forth an odour of rotten eggs stirred up with decayed onions. He hands some of the yokes to his lady, and some to his children, and then helps himself largely. Their attacks are vigorous, their relish is astonishing. I must admit that, for some little time, my new friends sank in my estimation. I could not have imagined such a thing of them. I had heard of Esquimaux eating blubber, and Russians eating tallow; but that my polished friends should eat such an abomination as this, was beyond my conception.

The durian, however, is finished in due course, and its odours evaporate. My self-possession revives, and my host explains the enigma. He said, "I am not astonished at your dislike to the fruit. Few Europeans will partake of it at first ; but, wait a bit, when you come back from Penang to see me again, I will have a very nice one ready for you. I know that you will then not only like them, but you will be excessively fond of them." He told the truth. Two years afterwards I learnt to perceive the piquant flavour, the unsurpassed delicacy, the fragrant richness of the durian. I have tasted the fruits, since then, of many parts of the world. Years have gone by, and I still hold that all fruits are tame and tasteless when placed beside the favourite Malayan king of fruits.

I parted with my kind host in the evening, and was on board again before dark. A noticeable incident on the way was a drunken European, who was being carried and carefully tended by half-a-dozen black half-naked natives of the Coromandel coast. It appeared that he was their navigator, so they were carrying him to their vessel, where he would come round again before sailing, as on board he could get no spirits.

1. This refers to the ruins of St. Paul's Church which still stands on St. Paul's Hill in central Malacca.

2. Rumbowé: modern spelling is Rumbau.

CHAPTER VII.

PULO PINANG.

PENANG has been the subject of my thoughts for years. The interest of a kind and warm-hearted friend, had opened an avenue to this El Dorado. The long and oft-repeated discourses of an elder relative,¹ who had realized a fortune here, had served to clothe the spot with golden prospects. His stirring narrations of adventures originated at Penang amongst the Malays of Sumatra, Borneo, and Johore, which were crowned with ultimate success, surrounded it with an atmosphere of adventurous romance well calculated to lure the young adventurer. The coloured engravings of Captain Smith,² of the Bengal Engineers, which hung round the dining-room of my respected relative, furnished materials for a panorama exquisite in beauty, rich in scenery, comprising as they did gorgeous mansions, stately woodlands, wide-spreading plains, meandering rivers, gushing cascades, land-locked and snug harbours. The *tout ensemble* of these pictures led one to imagine that if there were an elysium on earth.

it was this. Such were the bases of my preconceived opinions of Penang, and the morning of the 7th of August, 183—³ found us nearing it.

On finishing breakfast, our Malacca captain looked out and pointed to land rising in the horizon, somewhat in the shape of a hog's back : he said, that is Penang. Favoured with the strong gales of the south-west monsoon, we rapidly approached it. At length we found ourselves running close under the steep shores of *Batu Mau*.

Now each place as it opens out is named by the skipper. Were my anticipations realized? I confess not. Deep disappointment laid its heavy load on my spirits. The highlands loomed heavy and shapeless ; their primeval forests have been destroyed, and are giving place to mangy patches of scrub and bare stones. The shores were muddy, and fringed with scrubby mangroves. On the Malayan side a few round ugly hills rose out of the low swampy dismal shore line. But, as we run up the channel, George Town rises — a long line of red tiles, with a solitary cocoa-nut tree sticking up here and there. Numerous boats came off filled with bald-pated, fat, round Chinamen, squabbling, screeching, and bellowing, in uncouth, parrot-like voices. On we go, and anchor close to a pillared jetty, and a fort shaded by umbrageous trees.⁴

I land at the jetty, and am beleaguered by scrambling naked natives, every one wishing to claim me as his own. I am asked my name. "*What's name,*

sar? What's name, *sar?* Where you come from? Where you come from? Where want to go? Me take you, *sar!* Me very good man, *sar!* I lay about me with my silk umbrella, and clearing a lane, jump into a hearse-like conveyance, drawn by a pony. I give the name of my destination, and off we drive, I know not where, nor by whom guided; nor do I understand a single syllable that my Jehu utters. Darkness is approaching: we pass along long lines of low, red-tiled, dirty buildings, tenanted by Chinese and natives of Hindostan. The lines seem interminable. At length we roll over a high wooden bridge, crossing a fetid, sluggish, salt water creek. On we go, through low mangrove marshes; now we enter dark dismal plantations of tall cocoa-nut trees, and anon we emerge a little. The stars peep out; we pass through musty native villages, built with spars and long leaves, tenanted by brown, turbaned, bald-pated natives. On we roll, and pass through low jungle, perchance the haunt of the Malay *peniamum* or robber. At length we came on cultivation again. My Jehu is true to his trust. We enter a long avenue bordered by round handsome little trees. The portals are discerned through a curved avenue of arseenna trees, and anon the carriage drives under an ample *porte-cochère*. It stops, and the little pony with its driver stand panting, perspiring, and breathless.

The mansion of my friend is palatial; tall white pillars, spacious flights of steps, broad airy verandahs,

open entrance hall. The liveried servants are grouped about, clothed in white robes, gold-laced turbans, and bright sashes. Numerous lamps cast their light on the various elegant objects, and display the pompous grandeur, the lordly array of the Indian household.

1. The 'elder relative' was David Brown of Berwickshire, who owned the Glugor Estate on Penang Island, and whose son, David Wardlaw Brown, was living at Glugor and hosted Thomson on his arrival there.

2. Captain Robert Smith, Royal Engineers, painted a series of charming pictures of early Penang in the 1820s.

3. 7 August 1838, that is, two weeks prior to Thomson's seventeenth birthday.

4. i.e., Fort Cornwallis, whose ramparts still stand on the point at George Town.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE DINNER PARTY.

PENANG, though not inviting in appearance from without, soon improved on better acquaintance. The European residents were few in number, but they were hospitable, social, kind, and agreeable. Travellers and passengers are sure to experience all the attention that warm hearts and open doors can supply. The entertainments, public and private, were frequent, brilliant, and lavish. The object of this chapter will be to describe a private entertainment, which will serve as a type of many of which I had the honour to partake.

The house belongs to a merchant and planter. It is situated within the precincts of George Town. It is a pillared and verandahed mansion, with ground and upper floor. Green venetians close in the upper rooms, which admit or close out the shifting breezes, at pleasure. A large red-tiled roof of rigidly plain features covers the whole. Various fruit trees are planted in the enclosure or compound, clean gravel roads lead up to the portico, under which the visitor

arrives. The front of the house commands a view of the esplanade, the fort, and the harbour. The arsenna trees in the fort were a beautiful feature; but, like many old friends, perchance have now disappeared.

But to proceed, the first visitor arrives at seven p.m. exactly. He drives up in his buggy drawn by a smart piebalded Acheen pony. His servant, or as he calls him his boy, sits beside him, and his groom or syce runs by the side. He is dressed in snow-white trousers and waistcoat. His coat is black, a forage cap, with white cover, is on his head, and his shoes are of canvas, pipeclayed, excepting at the extreme points of the toes, where they are of black japanned leather. He steps down, and is conducted by the host up-stairs to a verandah brilliantly lighted for the occasion. Here he is introduced to the hostess sitting in state. Compliments are passed, and mine host asks him if he has brought his white jacket. If so, he retires, and dons the easy, cool, upper dress of India. Other visitors arrive, and the same process is gone through. Such gentlemen as have brought their ladies, hand them over to the obliging care of the hostess and her maid servants or ayahs. Sherry and bitters stand on a side table for the gentlemen to partake of, and whet their torpid appetites. All having arrived, the first difficulties of the host commence. The ladies and gentlemen are apportioned, and their rights of precedence weighed with the strictest regard to rule, not

always giving entire satisfaction to the ladies. The party proceeds down stairs and enters the dining hall, where the family silver is spread in its full extent and variety. The visitors now advance solemnly to their respective positions. The ladies seat themselves, and the gentlemen follow. Exquisitely white napkins with fancy bread are laid before each chair. If a clergyman be present, in deference to him, a grace is asked for. Different soups in silver tureens, occupy the ends and middle of the table—mock turtle and *mulligatawny* being the favourites. The native servants, in their gaudy liveries, advance and stand with folded arms behind their masters and mistresses. Now the soups are served, and the clattering of spoons commences; the ice is broken, and the joke, laugh, and repartee go round.

Soups over, mine host asks his leading lady guest to take wine; this example is followed by all the other gentlemen. Meantime the soup has been cleared off, and the next course (fish) takes its place. Now if any one wishes to partake of good fish, Penang is the place. The sole and the snangan of Penang exceed in delicacy of flavour the fish of all other parts. Here again the brisk clatter of forks proves the goodness of the entertainment.

The fish is cleared off, and now come joints of sweet Bengal mutton, Chinese capons, Keddah fowls and Sangora ducks, Yorkshire hams, Java potatoes, and Malay ubis. The conversation waxes

louder, and the ladies unbend from their rigidity. This course comes to an end and a general round of drinking healths takes place. Meanwhile the table is cleared, and the next course, which is a short one of rice and curry, succeeds; this is accompanied with *sambals* of pungent taste, Bombay ducks, and Cam-par roes, salted turtle eggs, and omelettes.

The introduced neighbours condescend to take wine with each other; meanwhile the table is cleared and the dessert succeeds,—maccaroni puddings, shapes, and custards. Now champagne is more freely poured forth, and a huge cheese is placed on the table. This is discussed with libations of pale ale. A rosy pink for the first time blushes in the cheeks of the climate worn and pale ladies—a brilliant moment of their former selves. The gentlemen discuss the topics of the day. These topics are not often political, but generally passing events, such as the last government ball, the last case of piracy, or the progress of the Keddah war now raging. Tuanku Mahomed Saad¹ is a hero in their eyes, though a ruffianly pirate in the eyes of the Company's officials. At last the table is cleared of its cloth, and numerous fruits, with wine, are placed on the polished red wood. The inimitable durian is excluded, as also the coarser jack and chumpada; but the mangosteen, mango, pumaloe, langsat, rose apple, popya, and plantain find a place. The excellencies of each draw abundant attention, surprising the stranger with their variety of qualities—peculia-

rities of flavour enchanting to the most fastidious taste.

It is now 9 p.m. and the ladies retire to the drawing-room on the upper floor. The gentlemen sit a while, probably a quarter to half an hour, and then follow. The drawing-room is capacious, high, and airy. Its walls and ceiling are whitewashed; its floor is covered with Bengal mats. To the English taste, the furniture is plain. Glass shaded lamps are arranged round the walls. The effect of this is pleasing and brilliant. The white dresses and jewellery of the ladies are now set off to the best advantage.

Coffee and tea are served, and form an antidote to the stronger beverages previously indulged in. The ladies now receive that expected attention from the more gallant portion of the gentlemen visitors. The piano is opened, and a duet is played. The card players retire to a snug cool end of the verandah, where also brandy and water may be had *ad libitum*. The young ladies take their turn at the piano, and it may be the room is cleared for dancing. The China scarf over that young officer's shoulder shows where his heart has gone to. A swarm of butterflies flicker round that young English rose just arrived—she is enraptured, and pities her pale sisters—poor things! The hostess is all smiles and complacency, indulgently anxious about the comforts and amusements of her visitors, and our host seeks out with generous affability such

young and unknown strangers as have had *entrée* to the entertainment.

'Tis 11 ; now the matrons show symptoms of moving. The party is broken up, and long strings of conveyances, with their spangling lamps, are soon moving homewards along the level street. Here we may close also.

1. For a fuller account of this Koshik prince, see p. 157.

CHAPTER IX.

THE CHURCH.

IF the English be the true church, it was evident the East India Company did not think so. True, the Company paid their chaplains munificently; but it was not to teach much, but to preach little. True, handsome churches were erected at the principal stations; but it was not for religion's sake; some abstruse point of policy, beyond the comprehension of ordinary minds, no doubt was the moving cause. It is evident their support was not owing to Indian requirements, as Europeans in those days seldom attended church, and the natives were Mahomedans or pagans.

To say it was the patronage afforded to the political bench of bishops in Parliament assembled, would be an unamiable suggestion. We will, therefore, not guess at this. Certain it is that it could not be for the sake of their native subjects, as proselytism was forbidden under the heaviest pains and penalties. The extension of the benign influence of Christian doctrines and practice thus evidently

formed none of the moving causes of the Company's liberal support of the Church of England.

Penang church¹ is a little gem in the wilderness of unbelief and superstition. Its Doric portico, with coupled columns, standing boldly out before a chaste and modestly ornamented facade, speaks to the eye of the artist; its small but elegant tower and spire, shooting up amongst the casuarina and arsenna groves, recall to memory the common, but grateful feature of an English landscape. Before the church, stands a handsome monument to the memory of Captain William Light,² the founder of the settlement, constructed at the expense of one of the merchant princes of the island.

Let us enter the church at Sunday-morning service. The interior is in the purest taste fitted for the climate. The pews are not boxed in, but an open railing closes round each. The smallest breath of air can flow through the nave. It is fitted up with the most scrupulous care for the comfort of the congregation. Two dark pagans draw the long punkabs over the heads of the assembled worshippers, and another is seen busily pumping air into the organ up in the gallery. Our first shock is experienced.

Let us scan the congregation. The church is seated for 300 or 400. There are twenty worshippers. Five young ladies sit in one pew,—yellow, meagre, emaciated. One fine old veteran sits in another pew; and an honest black woman, his wife,

clothed in muslins, sits in the pew behind him. A stout, bald-headed gentleman sits in another pew, who fans himself continuously with a China fan. A long, cadaverous-looking gentleman occupies another pew, but he stretches his long legs through the railing upon the next seat in front of him. One handsome brunette, with a prematurely withered mother, occupies another pew. These, and a few men from the garrison, compose the congregation.

But now the organ peals forth its soul-inspiring strains, and the clergyman and his clerk enter. They both differ greatly from the home genus. The responses are read by the clerk with a flippant air, nor do the congregation join in any way whatever. His insincere enunciation of earnest supplications have no seconders. All is silent as the sepulchre. The psalms are given out; our clerk does not condescend to sing, nor do the congregation. The poor pagan in the gallery causes the only sounds that are sent up to the All-powerful, the All-beneficent,—to what end? The sermon is short, dull, and unpractical. It indulges only in the commonest platitudes, sleepy and unattractive. This over, no charity is asked; but the pagan in the gallery causes the organ to send up the only sounds worthy to be listened to on that day. The *syces* bring our conveyances underneath the portico, and we disperse.

And does this curate of souls visit his people?—No! What does he do?—He plants nutmegs.

What is his stipend?—1200*l.* per annum. Why does he not go amongst his people?—Simply because he is not wanted. The moral influence of the gentle English woman had not made itself felt here. Is he to blame?—Not entirely; he is the child of circumstances, and his healthy English nature has altered accordingly. But what a glorious field for a really earnest Christian minister!—ten thousand souls to be saved! The settlement is steeped in the darkness of paganism. True,—but the field is not his. *His earthly masters forbid him to be an apostle to the heathen, and his heavenly Master's commands are neglected!* He is the *burra padre*, or great man's priest; not the *coolly padre*, or poor man's minister. He is here because he is well paid for it; and his only thoughts are how to make money and get out of the place.

1. Here Thomson is writing about St. George's Church, Georgetown, which is still used for worship today.

2. 'William' Light is obviously an error, as Thomson is referring to the monument to Captain Francis Light, the founder of Penang, in front of St. George's Church. He may have been thinking of Francis Light's son, William, who founded Adelaide and became the first Surveyor-General of South Australia, and whom might have been known to Thomson.

CHAPTER X

MECCAWEE.

TIME passes swiftly; and ere long I have learnt the native languages. My duties take me amongst the natives, and I have a new wide world opened to view. Amongst the earliest of the native gentlemen I met, was Meccawee, an Arab priest, a native of Mecca—for he had three marks on his cheek, the stamp of his holy native city. Meccawee was a Mahomedan, a man of influence with the Malay population, and, as such, if not courted, was taken notice of and patronized by the leading European residents, official and non-official. I had frequent intercourse with Meccawee at the hospitable house of a friend, where he was not only made welcome, but where he came and went as the most intimate of friends. Meccawee being a Mahomedan, would not sit at table with his Christian friends; but on other scores he had no compunctions of religion or prejudice. He drank his sherbet, and munched his biscuits, on the understanding that there were no spirits in the former, nor hog's-lard in the latter.

Intimately acquainted with the various social and political movements of the natives, his conversation was interesting and entertaining. At this time the war of Tuanku Mahomed Saad was going on, on the opposite shores, against the Siamese; and this was a fertile subject of discussion between him and his friends. He would fulminate anathemas against the pigs of idolaters who were now, with the assistance of a British frigate, crushing the spirit of independence that had long lived in Keddah; and he was thoroughly sympathised with by the European merchants and planters, who, with the true instincts of John Bull, sided with the oppressed, whether right or wrong.

In these discussions, I remember a well-meaning but ill-advised friend, expatiating to the surrounding and puzzled Malays on the glories of liberty, equality, and fraternity. He urged them to resist the oppressor to the last, and, holding a billiard-cue in his hand, he would show them, to their infinite delight, how he would *run-a-muck* amongst the Rajah of Ligor's terrified and flying soldiers. He forgot at the same time the parallel between the English and Siamese governments. But this was of little consequence. His auditors' views had not a large range, nor were they imbued with the feelings of our revolutionary friend; they were profoundly ignorant of all such doctrines, contenting themselves with the fact that there were rajahs (princes), and ryots (people), and that there was

no use of rajahs without ryots, or ryots without rajahs.

In these discussions our friend Meccawee would give place to our revolutionary friend, sit in his wicker chair, smoke his host's cheroots and sip his lemonade with an air of supreme satisfaction. He was contented with the good things of Fulo Fee-nang as he pronounced it; his interest in Keddah independence was not sufficiently strong to induce him to undertake the hardships of a campaign. Under the Altai mountains with their rough and bracing climate, Meccawee might have been a fanatical, restless, and enterprising follower of Ali—in the dreamy airs of the Straits, he was easy and listless. But he would wake up, at times; and, taking a cue in his hands, he would challenge his intrepid white friend to a game at billiards—here he was hard to beat.

Meccawee dressed in flowing robes, red sandals, and gold-threaded turban of enormous dimensions. Of a leather-coloured countenance, and thin in body, he was wiry as became the child of Arabia. His house was situated on a snug sandy beach, covered with cocoa-nut trees, which gave a grateful shade during the day. But to his house he did not invite his most intimate friends. They were excluded with such jealousy as is only known to the Mussulman. In front of his house was a *pondoh* or shed on posts. To this place we were escorted when paying our respects. Coffee and cheroots were soon

provided by his dark Abyssinian attendant, and here we would enjoy the cool sea breezes for hours together.

Meccawee's great dread was of pirates, who at this time frequently pounced on the inhabitants of the sea shores, and carried them off to slavery into other Malay states. One time, near the middle of the night, we made an inroad upon Meccawee's hospitality, and were received by him in a great state of fright. He was swinging his long sword round his head in a manner which proved that it would have been difficult to have carried him off.

But pirates may not have been the only cause of trepidation. Meccawee was an Arab, and a handsome man. He was popular amongst the Malay ladies, and his moral code gave him considerable latitude. It was pretty freely hinted that he was not contented with the limits of his own harem. True it is, in quarrels, divorces, exorcisms of evil spirits, Meccawee's influence was had recourse to, and here his power and sway were unlimited. The neglected husbands, in their own impure imaginations, pictured their faults as appertaining also to Meccawee, and this no doubt gave rise to the libel. At least let us say so.

Such was an Arab disciple of the prophet Mahomed amongst the Malays. And why should his religion have succeeded, with Christianity as its compeer and opponent? Compare the portraits, and one or two causes, amongst many, may be guessed at. The Christian priest, unapproachable—

secluded—above the people; the Mahomedan priest accessible—mixing with, and on a level with the people. Both possessed of superior energy—purer dogmas—foundations to a firm faith—surely the one who wedded his sympathies to those of the people, even though he partook of their faults, sins, and weaknesses, would gain the day! This is undoubtedly one of the causes of the success of Mahomedanism over Christianity in the Far East; but I may, when speaking of missionaries, enter into the subject more at length.

CHAPTER XI.

AN EXCURSION.

THOUGH the island of Penang appeared to be nothing but hills, it was found to possess ample plains and valleys. The plain of Peniagre, on which George Town and its suburbs stand, is a dead level for several miles; and here the densest portion of the population is found. Rich plantations of cocoa nut and betel nut, alternate with paddy and sugar-cane fields. This was the prevailing feature, but in the midst, esplanades, open lawns, and nutmeg gardens were laid out here and there. The roads were numerous, and at that time they were in excellent order; indeed so smooth and level were they, that it was quite a pleasure to ride or drive along them. In many places the tall palm-trees hung over the roads, and afforded grateful shelter from the noonday sun. Another plain stretches out on the western shores of the island, called Bally Pulo. This plain was even at that time pretty well cultivated, but no doubt much progress has been made since then. Again a fine fertile plain

stretched along the south-eastern shores of the island from Soongei Nibong to Byan Lepas.¹ The most extensive paddy fields are here found, and surrounding the same are groves of palms and fruit-trees shading the numerous villages of the natives.

It was on this plain that a surveyor was engaged in his exposed and toilsome occupation; and as a relief to monotony he had invited several of his military, merchant, and planting friends to a picnic. An early start was made before daybreak, and a smart ride brought us to the survey camp before 8 a.m. We found our friend camped under a dense cocoa-nut grove, near the Malay village. He was engaged "on hospitable thoughts intent," urging his Bengalee cook to kill some fowls to be grilled, stewed, and devilled for his expected visitors.

We were soon seated round his improvised table, placed beneath his snug but sufficiently capacious tent; and mountains of rice curries and other cunning devices, had sore havoc made upon them by appetites whetted by the long ride and morning air. Having despatched breakfast, we mounted our little hardy Sumatra ponies; and, wending our way through paddy fields and cocoa-nut groves, we made for the beach. It was harvest time, and the plains waved with golden corn; for rice has a straw and head not very unlike those of the oat. The face of the country was rich in the extreme. The hazy warm mist of the torrid zone hung over the

landscape, tinting the hills and forest with gorgeous purple. The sea breeze wafted gently through the trees, and the busy hum of life resounded from the villages and harvest fields. Here a band of reapers, —not with the sickle, but with the *rungum*—plucked, or rather cut off, the heads of corn, and deposited them in baskets. This slow and laborious process was giving ample employment to young and old, male and female. But how different was the aspect of these same reapers. No red cheeks and pearly laughing teeth—no sturdy arms plying away at full speed. The reapers were dusky, yellow and brown, in complexion, and their teeth were jet black. They wore basket-shaped hats, and worked with an apathy, listlessness, and contentment which was disgusting to me an Anglo-Saxon. We wondered when their task would come to an end.

The peculiar odour of the paddy field, struck me for the first time. I cannot describe it, yet it has a peculiarity of its own as little to be forgotten as the smell of fresh mown hay. Now was also the season for flying paper kites—a pastime in which both old and young engage—in fact an old Malay is a very child in this respect. Hundreds of kites—of various forms, from the serpent to the turtle—were sporting in the air. Many of these kites had instruments attached to them that hummed a loud tone when acted upon by the air. The din of these added no little to the gaiety and excitement of the scene. But amongst the most notable objects were

the clumps of bamboo,—tall, graceful, and umbrageous. From the outer inclining branches, hung, in wonderful abundance, large pear-shaped pendicles, which proved on examination to be birds' nests. These were found to be constructed of grass, in a most scientific manner, by intertwining; and at the very bottom was found the entrance by which the interior is reached. The natives informed us that the object of the birds in selecting the very ends of the outermost branches was to keep their young ones safe from the snakes, which were not only very abundant, but very voracious. These numerous pendant nests, hanging as they did to the tiniest of the branches, suggested a calm atmosphere and universal repose.

As we rode through the villages, the boys ran from us calling out "The white man"—"the white man," (orang putih—orang putih,) and the young girls shrunk with timidity behind the nearest shelter; which informed us that nature here also had clothed the gentler sex in the garments of modesty, thus affording her the most potent protection.

On we rode, till we came to a large cocoa-nut plantation, and soon afterwards we reached the beach. Here the cocoa-nut was in its prime; its feather-like leaves wooed the sea-breeze, and drank in the saline particles carried through the air. The tops were loaded with fruit, and the hot ride made us long for a refreshing drink. This is well supplied by the cocoa-nut. One of our sycees

knowing our wants, sprang to a tree, and, holding by and stepping on the notches cut in the stem of the tree, he soon got to the top, and sent down an abundance of nuts from an elevation of eighty feet or more. We drank to our hearts' content; and after enjoying the prospect of the open sea, with its blue and sparkling waters, we returned to the camp.

It was now evening, and a smoking dinner, consisting of such materials as could be bought in the village, was spread on the table. The food was plain and abundant, and ample justice was done to it. Our party consisted of a planter, a merchant, a captain of the Madras Native Infantry, a lieutenant ditto, an ensign ditto, and myself. We were all very much fagged by the day's excursion excepting the planter, who was indomitable. Our dinner was consequently eaten with long faces and in silence. The lieutenant was a harum-scarum sort of a fellow. His brother had been *pinked* in Paris, he himself had picked quarrels with several of his friends, but none would fight. The last case was with a merchant to whom he owed a heavy bill for drinkables. This merchant was known to have ostentatiously—if not rather unbecomingly—boasted of having drawn a trigger on an antagonist. This boast was a godsend to the lieutenant, as he had now a man that would fight. He thought he would "kill two birds with one stone," ridding himself of the merchant and his

debts at the same time. He soon picked a quarrel with the merchant at a dinner, which ended in his throwing a decanter full of wine at the merchant's head, and "calling him out" next morning. Here was a practical test that the merchant had not counted on. He did not relish his position. His merchant friends held consultation, and saved their brother by collectively taking the onus of refusing a meeting on themselves. After this, the merchant was dogged and insulted by the lieutenant on every opportunity. On one occasion, while the military band was performing, the merchant was in the act of speaking to a lady in one of the carriages. This being perceived by the gallant lieutenant, he at once walked up and said, "Pray, Mrs. —, do not pollute your pretty lips by speaking to such a cowardly fellow as this." The society of that day bore with the lieutenant's eccentricities,—nay, supported and applauded him. The end of the "good old times" had then not yet come.

The lieutenant was a wild fellow, a merry companion, a deep drinker. He had been at death's door several times, from inflammation of the liver. At this time he was convalescent. Wearied and exhausted, he tasted nothing but the champagne, which revived him. The ensign was the next notable character. A man of Herculean powers, but affected with king's evil and dysentery. His legs were a mass of ulcers; yet did the strong young man fight against the afflictions of nature,—

he eat, drank, and made merry. Till dinner was over, the pangs of his complaint dulled his temper, and he sat silent. The others were grave by example, and we sat, and ate, and said nothing. I began to think Indian society a dull affair, but I was uninitiated—strange to the climate and the company.

The surveyor was a little volatile fellow,—merry as a cricket in company, dull and dejected when solitary. Passionately fond of music, he beguiled the long solitary hours of the lonely surveyor's camp with his inimitable violin. He could draw such strains from it as to alternately cause sorrow, mirth, or absolute delight. When dinner was over, the violin was called for on all sides. The unstinted champagne had also now begun to dilate the heart and banish care.

H—— struck up first, in a melancholy, subdued tone, soothing to the present humour of the company, softly sympathizing in their dejection. The ensign groaned audibly, and the lieutenant prostrated himself backwards. The planter shed tears. The very cocoa-nut trees bent their tall gaunt stems forward and hung their sombre heads as if bewailing in company. H—— knew his powers, and he went on gently,—changing so gradually that it was scarcely perceptible. He ran through a number of strains till at length his airs had become lively. Here a slight movement in the company betokened returning animation. H—— continued

drawing his bow, gradually quickening its speed, till at length he ran over the liveliest tunes with all the energy and vivacity of which he was capable. The ensign stood up on his legs, and the next thing he did was to dance a hornpipe. The lieutenant roared an accompaniment. Some beat time with their fists on the table, others stamped with their feet. All care was soon forgotten, and the voice of merriment and laughter resounded through the palm groves. The late lugubrious company became a wonder to the villagers, a source of terror to the owls, bats, and monkeys. The love song succeeded the bacchanalian ditty. The wine glasses were cast aside, and the tumblers flowed with sparkling champagne.

The merchant sang,—

“ For while good humour is afloat,
E'er to part would be a sin ;
Drink and fill another toast,
Drink and fill the bowl again.”

Trials of strength, and wrestling matches by torchlight, succeeded the songs. The planter pressed down the ensign's arm on the table as he would an infant's. Foiled here, the lieutenant, for the honour of the cloth, would wrestle with the victorious planter. The grass is cleared, and they fall-to. The planter throws the lieutenant full length on the sward, with a dash sufficient to unhinge his joints. The fighting lieutenant rises with pain,—we watch him. He proves true game ; not

the slightest spark of a Malay or Spaniard was in his nature. He was a true John Bull, with all his faults. He rose with difficulty, and with the most perfect good humour drank success to his overthrower. Here was a fine young fellow thrown away on the easy-going Madras army. The *Mulls* had had little fighting for many years. The officers had merely to save and not commit themselves, and they returned home with their pockets full of rupees, and their names, though not their actions, full of military honours. The proper arena for our lieutenant would have been in the plains of Afghanistan or before Ghizni. In such a sphere he would have shone conspicuously,—in leading a forlorn hope, or in any task to which his duty called him. Here, his overflowing energies threw him into mischief, excess, and devilment. Torpitude fostered the inferior qualities of his nature, and probably an early and obscure grave was his fate. I turned to the Madras almanac some years afterwards, but his name was not amongst the list of officers. Such is life. As for our host H——, he found a sudden fate and an early grave in India. He was long remembered by his associates in Penang as a most agreeable companion,—they were equally fascinated by his vivacity and good humour, to which his inimitable violin contributed not a little *éclat*.

My narration may appear commonplace, but my object is not alone to describe the “goings on” of

some young men. Let us inquire as to their surroundings. They were in an obscure Malay village, whose houses were constructed of palm leaves, penetrable by every sound. The Malays are a quiet race, jealous, amatory, and revengeful. They as a class judged of Europeans generally from what they saw of common sailors streaming out of the frigates and merchant ships, to run into the excesses of drunkenness and vice in the seaport towns. The Malay man never makes a noise but when something serious is abroad—an amok or a brawl, in which the kris is readily drawn, blood flows, and perhaps life is taken. Of the Europeans, in this respect, they judged as of themselves,—for the Malay princes in their progresses and entertainments supply their friends' beds with damsels from their villages,—and the revels of that night in their midst kept the village in a state of excitement and panic. The daughters clung to their mothers' bosoms, and the fathers grasped their weapons in sullenness. But they had misjudged the *nature of the educated European; with his moral training, his intellectual cultivation, and his power of self control.*

Early dawn found the surveyor's camp silent and deserted, and we were scampering through the cold, misty, yet reviving mangrove swamps of Sungei Cluang, on our way towards George Town.

1. Bayan Lepas is now the site of Penang airport.

CHAPTER XII.

NATIVE MARRIAGE CEREMONY.

I ACCOMPANIED two friends one evening to a Malay marriage, to which we had been invited. The marriage was to be celebrated at a village a considerable way out of George Town, so that it was dark before we arrived at the place. Stepping out of our palanquin,¹ we entered a cluster of attap houses, standing, without much order, under shady groves of cocoa-nut trees. With the assistance of a native guide, we soon found the house. It was like other Malay houses, constructed of round posts and long leaves called *attaps*. The floor was about four to five feet from the ground, and underneath the area was open. We ascended to the floor by means of a wooden ladder. The floor was constructed with nibong laths, bound down to the joists by means of split rattans. Over the floor were laid abundance of native mats, which were comfortable to sit upon, but we, by way of compliment, were provided with chairs.

The Malay owner of the house, being a poor

man, did not shake hands with us ; but, with a cheerful *tabbeh*, or Malay salute, ushered us into the room, where the preparations for the ceremony were completed. The apartment was small, probably not over fourteen feet square ; and fifteen or twenty Malay relatives were assembled in it. In a back room were the female members of the family, with their friends. Those were observed to be peering through the trellis work. They were supposed to see, but not to be seen.

As this was the first time that I had come socially in contact with the Malays, my observations were close, though my ignorance of the language prevented me from understanding much. I need not say my preconceived ideas were unfavourable to the race ; but the first sight was sufficient to allay disagreeable feelings. Our host was copper-coloured, dressed in garments not unlike those worn by the highlanders of Scotland, only the colours were more sombre than those of the tartan. He was somewhat wrinkled with age, and had neither whiskers nor beard. His eyes were mild and dark, and his teeth were filed down to the gums. His mouth was the worst feature, and he added to its ugliness by sticking a ball of tobacco between his teeth and upper lip. Yet his soft language, agreeable manners, and respectful bearing, ministered to his white friends' ease, if not somewhat to their vanity. Being a Mahomedan, we were not introduced to his wife or family ; these were kept out of sight in the inner room.

After we had sat a while, the bridegroom was carried in. He was a boy of thirteen years of age, handsomely dressed in a silken baju and sarong, with a bugis sapatangan on his head. His nether man was clad in the Acheen seluar, ornamented with gold-worked thread. He was placed on a dais, soon after which his intended was carried in by the women, and placed beside him. She was a girl of eleven years of age, also handsomely dressed in loose and flowing silken sarongs and green-coloured baju. Her hair was drawn back, and secured with numerous gold pins; but I must plead a limited knowledge of the mysteries of the Malayan lady's wardrobe.

The bride and bridegroom sat abashed and immoveable, with downcast eyes, apparently awake to nothing around them. Rice and fruit were laid in the middle of the floor before them, with brass cups and other utensils. The native musicians struck up a soft, slow, and whining tune with tomtoms and sulings (drums and flageolets.) Now a handsomely dressed Malay entered and squatted on the floor. He salaamed down to the mats several times, after which he commenced to move his arms in slow and graceful snakelike movements, glistening snakelike. On he goes, gradually warming with the accelerated music till he rises on his feet, and moves round and round, with a brass vase upon his head. He wriggles in apparent ecstasy as he contorts his supple form, till at length exhausted he drops on

the floor, and the music ceases. An elder now steps forward, and utters many passages from the Koran, unintelligible either to us or the Malays. Some minor ceremonies are gone through, such as placing rice in the hands of the betrothed, and these being completed, the couple were said to be married. They were consequently carried out, and we departed. The after feasts and rejoicings we did not remain to witness; no doubt they would be lively and protracted. In some cases they extend over several days.

1. A palanquin was a closed carriage.

CHAPTER XIII.

KOCKCHAL.

AFTER about twelve months, I could converse tolerably well in the Malayan language. The conversation of my friends no longer appeared a chattering jargon, tiresome to listen to. The prominent expressions first impressed themselves on the memory; then, by degrees, a soft flowing language issued out of the apparent chaos of words. With the possession of the language of the country, the people no longer passed and repassed as groups of strange folks, in coloured cotton prints of grotesque costume. Our recognitions now were frequent, and our conversations friendly. The Malay—the bloodthirsty, revengeful, perfidious Malay—had subsided into a good-humoured, respectful, unsophisticated, little copper-coloured man, with a scanty light dress upon him. With such men who could not be good friends? When out on our excursions, hot, knocked up, gasping for breath, melting with the fierce noonday sun, who would not climb the tall coconut, and bring down the sweetest of the tope?

Or when this was not to be had, who would not search the pine-apple garden to bring forth the most luscious fruit, redundant with juicy nectar? Or if this was also wanting, who would not draw the grateful *niris* from the pendant attap plant? This was the Malay man in his own home—in the country of his birth, family, and affections. I speak of the land Malay. There were others besides the Malays inhabiting the island, *i. e.*, the Chinese, Bugis, Siamese, Burmese, Bengalese, Klings, Armenians, Jews, &c., &c. All spoke in the lingua franca of the East, so easy communication could be had by all who had mastered the Malay language.

The subject of the present sketch was a native of Penang, but of Chinese descent; his father had been a leading merchant in the early days of the settlement; from him considerable property had been inherited, though by this time a good deal of it had been dissipated. His father's grave was visited by the blind traveller Holman, on his voyage round the world. Kockchai was an enterprising man; he planted largely, and entered into many speculations, few of which seem to have added to his means. As agent for the Siamese government of Ligor, he was a man of consequence amongst the Keddah Malays, and Siamese. Indeed he was approached on all fours by the meaner classes of the latter. Kockchai had his town house in the city, and his country boxes in his nutmeg plantations. It is in one of the latter that I will introduce him to the

reader. The box is of cheap and fragile construction, but picturesquely situated, and well shaded by tall palm-trees. I was very intimate with Kockchai for several years, but never saw his wife or daughters. To have exposed these to the gaze of his friend the white man, would have been a cause of shame to him—to have asked their acquaintance an insult not to be forgiven. The reasons, though inexplicable to the Anglo-Saxon in Europe, are obvious to those of Oriental countries. Amongst all the leading tribes of Indo-Chinese, polygamy and concubinage being prevalent, their codes of morals are on a loose footing. This reason will suffice at present. The origin, causes, and effects, may be discussed at length hereafter. Under the above circumstances, I only knew Kockchai and some of his sons. The interior economy of his house was a sealed book to me. Even descendants of Europeans fall into the same custom in the seclusion of their women, and all friendly meetings of the sexes are apart. The men occupy the halls and verandahs, the women the interior apartments.

Kockchai might have been forty-five years of age at this time. There he sits, in the usual Chinese dress, in a large arm-chair, with his feet up on the front part of the seat, chewing siri and betel, and sipping sugarless and creamless tea. On seeing his friend coming, he whisks down his tail, and comes smiling to shake hands, calling the syce at the same time to take charge of the pony. The next thing

would be to ask the *khobar* or news; this would probably be regarding the defeat of Tuanku Mahomed Saad, and his retreat from Keddah now being occupied by the Siamese. From this we would proceed to discuss the systems of planting nutmegs, cloves, sugar, indigo, rice, betel nuts, and cocoa nuts, in all of which Kockchai had great experience. These discussions were most instructive to me—practical, amusing, scientific. The little secrets of culture, the times of bearing, and the profits, were all thoroughly sifted by this intelligent Indo-Chinese.

Exhausting this subject, we would go on to the local politics of the place; and, in doing so, Kockchai would put pertinent questions as to the governmental system of Europeans. The East India Company to him was an enigma; for the governors of empires—from Persia to China and Japan—were Emperors or Sultans. How could a company of *sudagars* (merchants) hold the greatest empire in the East? “And again,” he continued, “look at the governors we have in Pulo Pinang. I knew them as wild scamps of boys; now they order about men-of-war and Sepoy regiments, they hang mutineers and pirates, and do as they like. No greater men than they are to be seen, yet this cannot be *their power*; the power must come from somewhere else. But,” says Kockchai, with a knowing smile, “talking of governors, how is it that Tuan—— of the civil service is looked down upon

by Europeans? Myself and my class used to be looked down upon by the pure Chinese, but that is not the case now." Then he added, "I was very friendly with Tuan ——. Said I to him, 'Tuan —— jangan marah (don't be angry). May I ask a question?' 'Yes,' says Tuan ——. 'But,' said I, 'will you agree not to be angry whatever I may say?' 'No,' said Tuan ——. 'Then,' said I, 'how is it that the Europeans tell me that there is something *korong* (inferior) with you?' 'Ah,' says he, starting like to eat me, 'Kockchai, I will be Governor of Pulo Pinang yet.' He turned on his heel, and would scarcely ever look at me again." Here is a lesson; a proud, well educated Eurasian of high hopes and fine feelings rudely trespassed upon; would that only such as Kockchai were guilty of this.

Now we turn to religion. I explain the tenets of Christianity as well as I am able; but I fear with little success in my newly-acquired language. He is polite, and says, "We believe in God also, the author of all things. That God must be the same God as your God; but my countrymen have many superstitions which the ignorant men and women believe in; for instance, to-morrow is the *sambayang kramat* (religious rites at the groves). I and my whole family must be there. We take pork, sweetmeats, and all sorts of eatables, and place them before the grave of my father. We then bow to his manes; and after allowing, as is supposed, the essence to be

removed, we carry the feast to the lawn, and finish all up. Now I know well enough this is all nonsense, there is no difference in the eatables that I can see; but *the women and children believe otherwise, and I must ikoot (follow) them*, or there would be a nice 'how do you do' for it."

These were the sentiments of an intelligent Chinese. How great a change has taken place since that time! He and many other Chinese of my acquaintance seemed to be ripe for the better and purer religion. Their superstitions were gross; their priesthood ignorant, degraded, and despised. They professed a distorted Buddhism which their intelligent minds criticised unfavourably; but they were unacquainted with a higher faith upon which they might repose.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE FATAL ACCIDENT.

I WAS wrapped in the arms of Morpheus one night, when I was suddenly aroused by my Malay servant Yusof, who, in a great state of fright, and excitement, called me up, for a man had been crushed in a sugar-mill, working close by. It was then at work night and day to secure an over-ripe crop. I was up in an instant, and hastened to the scene. Here I found Yusof's information too true. A poor Malay had allowed his arm to be caught in trying to snatch his bill-hook, which had been carried into the rollers in feeding in the canes. His hand was drawn in, on and on, in two seconds' time, till the monster machinery ground against his shoulders. No presence of mind could have saved him, as the machinery could not be stopped in a moment.

When I arrived, the mill had been stopped, and the poor fellow extricated; and I now found him supported by several awe-stricken Malays, his right arm dangling by his side, a mass of mangled flesh,

as thin as a pancake. When he saw me, he cried in agony, "Oh Tuan, Tuan, for the sake of Allah (God), bring down your gun and shoot me. Kasihan, tuan (have pity, sir), and shoot me," broke forth from the poor creature. Horrified, my heart sank within me (I was then a lad). It would indeed have been well had he died, and escaped the torture he then suffered, and was about to suffer. I directed the Malays to bear him up to a shed, and to send for a European surgeon, and the man's own relatives. This done, I awaited with anxiety the issue. Pen cannot describe the wailings of his poor mother. Maternal feelings are deep, their range is universal, and they vindicated themselves here. The Malay mother's undying love drew forth tears of sympathy from all present.

Ere long the surgeon arrived, and the result of his examination was, that, to give even a distant chance of life, an amputation must take place at the shoulder-joint. The poor man was gently informed of this; and a reaction, after his terror and excitement, having taken place, he craved to live. The operation (for chloroform was not then known) was an excruciating one; it was performed by a bold, skilled, and firm hand. The ghastly remnants were removed, and laudanum brought relief. The side and shoulders had been so much torn that faint hope was given of recovery, but this faint hope was grasped at by the poor Malay. His mother caressed the poor fellow's head, sang sweet lullabies,

wailed and wept by turns. Yet there was hope, and she was cheerful at short intervals.

The poor man lingered for three days; and as I tended him at frequent intervals, I saw much of the workings of his nature. At times cheerful, he would talk of his prospects with smiles. At other times depressed, he would turn his wan, weary face to me; and, with an inexpressible air of hope, mingled with fear, say, "Tuan, shall I live?" To so earnest and piteous an appeal what could I say but "Ask help from God, and he may hear your prayer!" He was a Mahomedan. Was I right in saying prayers were universal? Conscience tells me "Yes." The fanatical of my countrymen only would say No. And I have met such fanatics in the garb of lambs. The prayers he uttered were not answered, and he died. The wailings of the mother at the dead of night sunk into my very soul.

The mill that had caused the sad accident was of European construction. It was the first erected in these parts. Its large proportions and great powers were a source of wonder to the natives, who came in crowds to see it. They sat all day long looking at it, and when darkness came on, they went away. The mill now became an object of terror, a superstitious dread got hold of the native mind, and no one could be induced to come near it. The works were stopped, and the crops were in danger. What was to be done? I consulted with an old Kling, called Krannee Bawasab, and he said, "Leave it to

me, the mill will be at work to-morrow. I must go and get a Malay dukun (doctor), but you must lend me five dollars."

When it was dark that evening, the Krannee came back with an old Malay dukun, carrying immense hanks of coarse thread. After various incantations he tied one end of the thread to the mill, and then he carefully let out the thread so that it might not break as he wended his way to a kramut (burial-place) half a mile distant. Here he tied the other end of the thread to a murderer's grave of great reputation. A murderer's grave is a place of pilgrimage amongst the Malays. This done, he repaired to the mill; and, having assembled the Malays, he exorcised the *hantus* (evil spirits) that had taken possession of the mill. This ceremony being finished, he drove the *hantus* along the thread to the grave, broke the thread, and declared the mill free to commence again, which was done accordingly.

CHAPTER XV.

PENANG HILLS.

HOWEVER patched like the Penang hills appear from the sea, their tops afford most delicious retreats from the scorching heat of the plains. On the summit of the Great Hill several bungalows are perched. The air here is buoyant, cool, elevating to the spirits, bracing to the nerves, and exciting to the appetite. Happy are the individuals whose means or duties will allow of frequent residence up here. Here are the governor's, recorder's, and principal merchants' bungalows. Here is a Sanatorium, far-famed over the East, to which many broken-down constitutions resort. To ascend and view this wonderful mountain, was my earnest desire; and the invitation of a friend soon enabled me to gratify my curiosity. I ascended the winding zigzag path early one morning, accompanied by a ship captain and a purser. We were mounted on smart little Delhi ponies. We had not proceeded far before a formidable snake stopped the way; and so bold was it, that we were forced to dismount

and pitch stones at it before it would glide into the forest. The length of this snake must have been eight feet. Of course the boa constrictor, which is here found, grows to a much greater length. There is something so repulsive and hideous in the snake, that no wonder it is the most cursed of all living things.

On we went, alternately admiring the expanding landscape, and the gigantic forest trees and ferns. We amuse ourselves with the chattering monkeys ; but what is that which rivets the captain's attention ? It is a centipede crawling up a tree. What a disgusting creature, with its immense forceps and many feet, its bright brown colour and hideous eyes ! We leave it alone, and ascend the path. The air perceptibly cools, the mists are refreshing ; and, when we arrive at Strawberry Hill, we are equally charmed by the magnificent wide-spreading prospect, and the true welcome of our host.

Our first luxury is a bath in cold water. How it strings the nerves and whets the appetite ! The gong sounds, and the native servants wait at breakfast-table. Fish, prawn-curries, cocoanut-curries, rice, the whitest and lightest breakfast loaves in the world, tea, coffee, cream, rich yellow fresh butter, sambals and roes, are done ample justice to ; our hearts rejoice, our good humour expands. The cool gentle zephyrs blow through the verandah, —our enjoyment is thorough. We retire to a shady seat, commanding a panoramic view of the Keddah

and Perak mountains and plains, the little islands, the narrow straits, the blue unbounded ocean. We turn again, and our eyes rest on the white glittering houses of the town, three thousand feet beneath us, the bands of intersecting roads, the clean regular nutmeg plantations, the scattered villages, and the green palm groves. Well has Penang earned the title of "Gem of the ocean;" well has she incited her numerous poets to sing of her in rapturous lays.

After we are rested, we walk out to make agreeable calls, and then we stretch out to the western hill, which is somewhat higher but does not command so interesting or so varied a prospect. On this day, my preconceived ideas of Penang were realized to their full extent; but there was this alloy, that, as is the case with Italian scenery, the plains and villages looked better the further they were distant from you. Distance lends enchantment to the view; but close proximity dissolves the charm.

Besides the Great Hill, there were several others, having their solitary bungalow perched on their very tops. Thus there was Mount Erskine, Mount Olivia, named after "Raffles'" first wife, the Highlands of Scotland, Jackson's Hill, Ibbetson's Hill, Brown's Hill, &c. On some, the houses were kept in good repair—in others, they were fast going to decay from having been abandoned. In regard to Jackson's Hill a melancholy tale is told. A retired officer of that name had pitched upon it as a home

for the evening of his days. He had a fine house built on it, and plantations laid out, but when he brought his family to take possession, all caught fever and died. The entire family was cut off at one fell swoop. The place had to be abandoned, and now the property was decaying rapidly.

Inced by curiosity, I rode up to this hill to take a view of the remains. I made my way up by a broad walk now rapidly being overgrown. I struggled through the bushes, notwithstanding the attacks of the land leeches which here infested the leaves. These little creepers drop from the foliage, and fastening themselves on the neck and ankles, gorge themselves with blood. After an hour's travel, I reached the bungalow, which I found yet in fair repair, the glass of the windows being whole and untouched. The nutmeg and clove trees yet held their heads above the rising *blukar* (scrub). The whole place had an air of melancholy that could be well sympathized in by a solitary traveller such as I was. All was death-like. There was neither motion nor sound to be heard excepting the child-like wail of the *unka* (ape), as now and then it cried out from the deep gorges beneath. Fit companion for the fatal spot!

1. This hill is labelled Captain Jackson's Hill on Thomson's map and lies SW of Great Hill.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE INDIAMAN.

ONE day I had made an excursion across the harbour to province Wellesley. A large sail was descried in the offing. It was morning, and the sea breeze had not yet set in, so she lay motionless upon the glassy waters; ere long the royals filled slightly, then the lower sails began to show symptoms of life; at length she got steerage way. She headed for the harbour, upon which she bore down with all sail set, from ringtail to jib-a-jib, and from mainsails to skyscrapers. As she neared the port, the smaller sails were taken in and furled; still she approaches, and the courses are hauled up, top-gallant sails are furled,—she is now near the anchorage. She dips her ensign to H.M.S. "Hyacinth," lying off the admiralty house. The main topsail is backed, her way is lost, the yards are lowered to the caps, and down goes the anchor. There she rides with all her masts and yards unclothed, a 1400-ton Indiaman direct from London.

This was a few years after the Honourable Com-

pany of Merchant Adventurers trading to the East—commonly called the East India Company—had lost their monopoly of the trade. Yet this was once one of their chartered ships, owned by a wealthy capitalist in London. The style of the old company was yet kept up to the old mark. The officers wore their uniforms; and their trading propensities, though curtailed by severer restrictions, were not at all blunted. The old mercenary covetousness, that so universally enriched the servant at the expense of his masters, had no abatement. I well remember a story of a captain of the olden times who had strict injunctions to carry his ship direct to China, having neglected these orders. His ship was only partially full of woollens and iron-ware, so here was a chance of a fortune lost to him were he to obey the orders of his Honourable masters in Leadenhall Street. So he took care to spring an important spar, bear up along the coast of Sumatra, and make for Penang. On hailing the pilot, the zealous captain's first inquiry was for the price of pepper and betel nut, not for the price of spars. He knew he could make cent. per cent. on a cargo of these articles by conveyance to China, and this was his errand. He loaded with these articles on his own account, and no doubt bought a house, and set up his establishment in Belgravia on the proceeds.

To proceed: the captain and officers of the present ship soon landed, and busied themselves amongst

the merchants, selling and bartering at a great rate. The captain had soft goods and spirits, the first officer hardware and wines, the purser all the above, besides cheeses and ales, the second officer had port wine and brandy; and so forth down to the cook, whose investments were in sardines and slops. The captain and purser having *entree* to the most wealthy circles, had great opportunities for the disposal of their wares; and here it might be remarked how the spirit of "the shop" intruded itself amongst circles polite: bargains were offered by the purser at dinners, breakfasts, and suppers, without much regard to decorum or good breeding. Yet the occasion seemed to justify this departure from the strict rules of etiquette—for he was a stranger, bringing news from a far away and much-loved home. His stay was to be short, so time was precious. This was the opportunity for settlers to stock their cellars with Madeira and Cape wines, for the ship had touched at both places on her voyage.

The event of an Indiaman dropping anchor in the harbour was a great one—a bustle and stir went through the whole island. Palanquins and ponies were held in great requisition for the men on leave. A gong was sounded, by order of the police authorities, all through the streets of the town, warning *respectable women* to keep indoors for the next three days, as the *English* were coming ashore—strange compliment to the English. The native pater-familias feels uneasy and locks his harem. The

arrack shops are filled with Jack tars "half seas over." They drive about the town, each with his coolie, whom he affectionately encircles with his left arm. But good humour does not always maintain itself. Here is a Jack hauling along a palanquin, with a dozen naked natives pulling against him. They drag backwards till he rushes at them. They fly, and he hauls again. On the coolies come behind and pull him backwards. Again he scatters them by a charge in all directions. Now the native police interfere; Jack is knocked down with a baton, and he is carried off into durance vile. The news spreads amongst his shipmates, and a rescue is determined on. Three sailors stagger along near the gaol. They pretend to be harmlessly drunk, so are allowed to near the entrance. One springs like a tiger on the tall lean sepoy, embraces him and his musket, and holds him thus as fast as a vice. The others spring on the piled fire-arms, and with these they send the guard flying. Other mates come up, and the gaol is ransacked, till their fellow is found and carried off in triumph to the town. The Malays sing a *pantun*, of which this is the translation—it is short, pithy, and expressive:—

"The Malay man eats rice,
The Chinaman eats pig,
But the white man drinks grog only."

1. HMS *Hyacinth* was the vessel which Sherard Osborn was serving in. This may have been the occasion when Thomson first met the 'little midshipman'.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE KINDURI.

THE European proprietor or planter, and especially he whose family has been long resident in the country, generally maintains a good understanding with his tenants or neighbours. The tenants and neighbours may be Hindoos, Mussulmans, or Buddhists, without producing either dislike or prejudice. If his family be of good repute, tradition upholds his favourable influence; his creed may be opponent to theirs, yet they forget the *naserani* (*Nazarine*), and see only the European gentleman, liberal in sentiment, superior in understanding, just in dealing, and affable in intercourse. These qualities, when they exist, easily win the affections of an unsophisticated race—simple in mind, credulous, superstitious, sensitive to kindness, and patient under injury.

On one occasion a planter of the island gave a *Kinduri*, or native feast, near his mansion, which was open to all comers, be they Hindoo, Malay, or Chinese. To this I had the favour of an invitation;

and, in company with my host, and his other friends, we repaired to the banquet to see what was going on.

Arriving on the ground about mid-day, we found it situated on a grassy lawn, bounded by tall coconut-trees. Under the shade of these trees, were groups of natives dressed out in their gayest costumes. The total number could not have been less than two thousand. The guests were of divers colours, creeds, and nations, all harmoniously bent on enjoyment and mutual forbearance; yet there was no intermingling of food; each class, nation, or caste cooked and eat by themselves. However much they might intermingle in looking at the various plays and pastimes, in regard to their food there was no abatement of jealousy. Several buffaloes had been killed for the Malays, dozens of pigs for the Chinese, and there was no want of vegetables and curry-stuffs for the Hindoos. Thus the whole area was full of savoury pungent smells, no doubt attractive to the taste of each and all. Certain it is, that the number of happy faces, the salaams and recognitions that awaited our host that day, showed that he was the most popular of men.

As the food was ready, so did the people squat down on the ground and devour. The Malays with their tubs of rice, bowls of curried buffalo, and sauces of sambals (condiments). They dug into the contents with their right hands, carefully keeping their left hands from the dishes, for reasons it

would offend good taste to mention. The Chinese with their kits of rice, and cups full of stewed pork, shovelled mouthfuls into their wide open jaws, laughing and joking in their uncouth dialects. Then again, the Hindoos eat their simple, quiet, and un-social meals, hidden in some out-of-the-way corner where nobody could see them—nay, not even their entertainer. Yet the aroma of their meals is agreeable; and they grunt satisfaction at intervals in a manner that is not to be described to ears polite.

While the feast goes on continuously, so do the games and plays. The basket foot-ball is tossed high into the air; pushing with the pole, racing, and kindred amusements are indulged in. The more exciting games of cock-fighting (*sabong ayam*) and gambling (*tikam poh*, or *mein judi*), to which the Malays are so much addicted, are disallowed here; but there is no lack of other amusements. It is now dusk: and what is that quietly-seated crowd over yonder doing? Let us go and see. There all sit;—not a breath is drawn, not a word uttered;—they sit for hours listening, and looking the best-behaved assembly I ever saw. It is the *Wyang Kulit*, or *Cheritre Jawa* (Leather Puppets, or Tales of Java.) Forbidden to be acted in its own country, now held by the Dutch, it finds a sphere and asylum in Malay and British territory. I shall try and describe what I understood of it—and this was very little and I believe most of the native audience were in the same predicament.

A large calico curtain, or sheet, hung on a frame, separated the actor from the crowd. Thus concealed, the actor rehearsed continuously and for hours, without stopping, either history or romance, the actual meaning of which no one could explain further than that the narratives appertained to ancient history, in which the Javanese kings and demigods were the heroes. This, by exciting the race to remembrance of their former independence, was held to have political effects so serious as not to be endured by the present rulers of that beautiful island. While the narrative continued, occasional shadows flickered on the curtain. These were the shadows of the images of the heroes, made of leather, and drawn backwards and forwards by strings. And such figures! The heroes of the Javanese were truly not men. They stood on two long stork-like legs, and wriggled about two lanky loose-jointed arms. But the heads and faces of the heroes surpassed the limbs, in the goose-like length of beak, the snake-like contour of head. Strange, uncouth, and fantastic must be the ancient mythology of the Javanese. Unlike the æsthetic Greeks, whose demigods were represented in the *human form divine*, their imaginations have followed the instinct of a grovelling and subdued people; so their demigods had not attained manhood; they were of an inferior type,—a type of the Javanese in their rank amongst the nations of the earth.

We tire of this, and proceed to a more noisy

scene. The audience is settled on the ground ; but occasional bursts of laughter take place. The actors are in the centre of the crowd, and are singing, accompanied by the drum and the flute. This is the *mein manora*, or Siamese play, of which the Malays are passionately fond. The acting consists of singing, dancing, joking, and repartee, boxing, kicking, and romping. The most attractive of the *dramatis personæ* is a beautiful, half-naked, copper-coloured girl, who sits in the midst, absorbed in unimpassioned contemplative mood. The music waxes louder as we approach ; the girl shows the slightest sign of motion ; a slight jingling of her numerous brass armlets takes place. Her arms begin to extend, as does the half-torpid snake, and in curves as graceful as its rising neck. The long finger-wires rear their crests as the plumed cockatoo. The silk plaid that lies across her breast flutters,—it is there not as a hiding, but as a decoration to her expanding charms. She rises slowly and by degrees,—inanimate, down-cast. She turns her slender body, rearing her arms in graceful sweeps over her head. Gentle, sleepy music accompanies the while. Her armlets jingle as she waves her slender arms in curves and circles. Her body, as pliant as the snake, assumes the most graceful postures. All eyes are rivetted on her. The music becomes animated, and her eye now sparkles ; she is full of life and feeling. Her gestures quicken ; she is the essence of passion ! A loud buzz issues from the crowd—a buzz of intense

enjoyment,—for the chord of the Asiatic's heart had been struck. His ecstacy has its short life; the music gradually dies out; while the actress sinks exhausted to the ground!

Now the *Merry Andrew* jeers, laughs, and pranks about. One chord had been struck; but it must not be played upon too strongly, so the ludicrous succeeds the amatory. When Merry Andrew had finished his performance, he took off his long, Roman-nosed red-cheeked mask, and displayed a small featured flat face, withered and careworn—a metamorphosis that suggested a moral which might have been read to advantage on that occasion by some who were present.

Leaving this, we proceed to the *Meinan Kling*, or Kling Theatre. This is also in the open ground; but seats are prepared for the Europeans. The stage for the actors was, in a rude way, not unlike the stages of Europe. Actors came forward, recited, conversed, fought, danced, and embraced in the manner of their white *confrères*. The heroes and heroines of the performances were painted in the flesh colour of Europeans—proving that a brown race duly honours the pale-faced sons of colder latitudes. The colloquies being in the most jumbled of Indian dialects, were difficult to understand; but an interpreter afforded us a fair knowledge of the plot as it was gradually wrought out. The forms of these natives are tall and handsome, those of their women symmetrical and graceful. But their

theatrical taste, as displayed that night, I am forced to say was coarse in the extreme—combining the lowest ribaldry with the most immodest actions that I had ever witnessed, though they were looked at and gloated over by men, women, and children.

The representation, as explained to us, was of a young hill native's first entry into a city, where he falls into disreputable company. In such company, his experiences were grossly displayed in a most practical manner. The native spectators, male and female, I must add, did not appear sensible of the indelicacy of the representation. Its moral seemed to the point; its expositions appropriate. "But, why," it may be asked, "did our host, an European, allow it?" How could he help himself? The whole affair was under the management of Kodjoo, a married man of high repute—a father of sons and daughters. Kodjoo was responsible to the crowd, and the crowd approved; so that interference was out of the question.

But after we had done with this, something more attractive seemed to have arisen; for men, women, and children were seen running helter skelter in one particular direction. The cause was soon explained by a number of Indian fireworks, blazing and sparkling over the heads of the coconut trees. The blue lights almost turned night into day, and cast a white tinge over the dark countenances of the spectators. An image is reared aloft amidst the laughter of the crowd, the women

and children welcome it with the cries of *Orang tua—
orang tua* (old man). The image is not long in
doing its part. It jets fire from its mouth, then
from the eyes, then from the nose, next from the
finger ends, next from the toe ends. Excitement
and merriment increase at each display till a climax
is reached by a stream of fire emanating from a
portion of the figure to which reference cannot be
made.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE DEVIL CAST OUT.

ACCOMPANIED by Bawasab, I arrived at a bungalow that stood on the plains opposite George Town; perhaps it would be difficult now to indicate the site of that same bungalow, but I will try to describe it and its surrounding scenery.

The plain, at that time, was covered with low scrub of *kamuntings* and *kudutus*. Some tall casuarina trees reared their lofty heads over the sea beach. Around their roots, and intermingling with the white sands, was the broad-leafed weed called *kang kong laut*. Alternate ridges of sand and swamp, extended a mile inland; then a dense tall mangrove forest hemmed all in for miles. No one, excepting the deer-stalkers, had ever penetrated it. Indeed so dense and impenetrable was it, that all the traffic of the well-populated plains in the interior, had either to go round by *Tulloh Ramis*, or by Prize River¹—either way being many miles of divergence.

Bounding the waste of scrub and swamp was

*Bagan Luar*² to the south, a village of Chinese and Malays. This village was densely planted with tall cocoa nuts. To the north was the village of *Bagan Jermal*, inhabited by Malay fishermen. Here also was a dense grove of palm trees. For miles the plain was waste, excepting at these two places,—a haunt for tigers, wild hogs, thieves, and cut-throats. A deserted redoubt was placed half way between the villages above noticed, over which a few luxuriant cocoa-nut and casuarina trees reared their heads. The site of the bungalow was called *Kubong Boyah*, that is, alligator bog—a fit name. The spot was dismal, lonely, and hideous; for, along the shores, the alligator infested the muddy flats, monthly, nay weekly pouncing on the prawn fishers, who breast deep, with an apathy and infatuation truly remarkable, pushed their nets over the very beds of the monsters. At night, clouds of mosquitoes darkened the rooms—a source of torment not to be evaded, excepting under the curtains. Many a time would I sit, as lonely as a church-mouse, studying the hard words of *Marsden's Malay Grammar*,³ enveloped in *sarangs* from head to foot, allowing only the eyes to have the light. Even here the little tormentors could not be warded off; but a constant blowing and flapping had to be kept up. Millions of frogs also set up a horrid croaking din, which prevented conversation, with such Malays as would stealthily draw near to have a *bechara dangan tuan* (a conversation with master).

In such a place, there was a feverish insecurity which had its excitement,—its romance, as a palliative to the dull, dismal dreariness of the evenings. Pirates and petty thieves were known constantly to be roving about. The footprints of the tiger were often scanned in the morning near and about the buffalo pens, the huge wild hog too had often broken in and ruthlessly destroyed months of planting and years of growth. Every one was armed here. If the Malay had not his villanous kris by his side he had a huge *golo* (chopper), so loaded pistols were the constant companions of my pillow. A dozen Klings slept in the verandah, armed with huge battens, no doubt to be flung away to lighten their flight if danger had appeared. But Yusof, my trusty body servant—my Malay boy, wore an implement he could use, as he lay outside of my bedroom door, which was a flamed damask *kris panjang*, of ugly look but not of great dimensions.

One night as I was spelling over some Malay *oondang oondang* (laws)—with Bawasab sitting tailor position on the matted floor, trying, no doubt, how to make two pieces go as far as four—I sat and looked at him, the companion of my drawing-room. My thoughts then took a flight far away, to beaming faces, bright eyes, dear associations. Again I looked at Bawasab: the contrast of circumstances appalled me for a moment; yet I began to study the features and dress of my native companion. There he was poring over a dirty book

full of strange uncouth characters—it was *Tamul*, with its *awenis* and *bawenis*. He was a little man, complexion dark brown. One of his eyes had a great white beam in it, it was stone blind. Not so the other; that was as good as two—snake-like, sparkling, dull, or animated, according to circumstances. Prompt in his master's service—active, wiry, intelligent—he travelled over dangerous ground night or day to gain a point. At dead of night, when the wind had died away, he would push across the straits in a little canoe, concealing money or valuables in some unthought-of corner; and, narrow as his escapes might have been, he was never caught! He wore his turban thrown far back, also a white long *baju* of cotton, a shawl round his waist, white cotton loose trousers, and he carried his keys upon his shoulders like King David of yore. The keys being tied to one end of his pocket handkerchief, while his *siree*, *betel* and tobacco would be tied up in the opposite corner. There he was a picture of contentment—drawing the white *chroom* over a leaf of *siree*.

But what is that *gaddoh* (noise)? Bawasab and I start to our feet. Our panic is short—for here a woman rushes up to a corner of the bungalow with a crowd of Malays after her. We descend and inquire the cause of the tumult. The woman cowers and draws herself up in a lump. Her husband dances about and vociferates, half in terror half in passion. His wife heeds him not. An elder steps

forward and explains to Bawasab that *sheitan suda masoh* (the devil has got inside of her). This explanation is perfectly satisfactory to Bawasab: it is quite intelligible, and he is a man of action at once. Bawasab cries, "Bring a pail of water, you *kurbous* (buffaloes), and I will soon cast him out for you." This mandate is quickly obeyed by numerous willing hands, and the woman is taken hold of by her friends. Bawasab utters rapid formularies in his rough, rolling, rattling *Tamul*,—the better that they are not understood, the more potent as they are mysterious to the simple crowd. At each sentence he sprinkles water over the enchanted one; and, at the conclusion, the whole pailful is cast over her. This done, she revives and becomes sensible; the devil has gone out of her, and she was restored to her husband's affections.

She had just given birth to an infant. Passing strange this, oh ye mothers of England! you will not believe it to be possible, still truth is sometimes stranger than fiction. I was then a lad and thought it strange too.

1. Obviously Thomson is referring to the Prye River (now spelt Perai).

2. Bagan Luar is now the site of Butterworth and remains the Malay name for this port.

3. William Marsden's classical *Grammar* was published along with his famous *Dictionary* in 1812.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE LAND PURCHASE.

I AROSE next morning at daylight ; a cool land wind blew its gentle breath through the venetians, reviving and invigorating in its effects. A mist hung close down to the ground, enveloping everything in obscurity. The heads of the tall casuarina trees were scarcely to be discerned. The elephants were busy eating their morning meal, consisting of plantain stalks, leaves, and sugar-cane. A kitten had lost its mother, and wandering out approached these huge animals. The elephants were female ones. They trumpeted with terror, rolling up their trunks into their mouths and making strong struggles to break their tethers. But this did not avail them ; they could not succeed in getting away, so they stood trembling all over, and evidenced a degree of fear, which to me appeared most surprising and ridiculous. Be that as it may, they were only quieted by the removal of the little innocent intruder. Now quieted, the elephants proceeded with

their meal, whisking about the branches over their backs and shoulders to drive away the flies.

After a good bath, I breakfasted, and taking one of the elephants, Bawasab and I mounted for a ride. The elephant was guided by a *gomala* (keeper), armed with an iron hook. The keeper sat astride on the elephant's neck, where he seemed to have the most perfect command of the docile creature. He made the huge brute kneel down for us to mount the howda, and on our being mounted, it rose. Then it proceeded on our journey with a shaking, disagreeable gait, but by its conveyance alone could we have penetrated through the scrubs and over the deep swamps, and by its means at length we were brought to the object of our search, viz., the house of *Urana*.

Urana was a Malay woman, with a large family of sons, whose mode of living was not apparent to any one. Her house was situated in the densest part of the scrub, from whence various devious and difficult outlets diverged. Urana's family of sons would have been held in high estimation had they been piratical; "for," said the Malays, "a pirate must necessarily be a man of courage. Our princes are pirates." But as they had the character of being only thieves, they were despised and disliked. "For," said the Malays, "thieves are cowards,—they go below the house to steal fowls in the dark."

Now, to maintain my truthfulness, I must further explain that to go below a Malay house is no

difficult matter. There are no stone foundations nor solid walls to dig under, but the house being raised on posts, the floor is several feet above the ground. Below the floor, are generally the goat and fowl pens, fenced round with wicker work, to guard them from the many enemies, both biped and quadruped.

The reputation of Urana and her family made it our policy to have them shifted to another neighbourhood. So the purchase of the house and property was a thing to be attained if possible. This was the errand of Bawasab, for, and on behalf of his white master; and I was a looker on. When we had got the elephant's trunk close up to the door, Bawasab greeted the old lady in the most winning accents, "*Tabbeh*, to you, Urana," said he, "I trust you are well."

"*Tabbeh-lah Krannee*," replied Urana. "Come in; I am a lone woman, and a poor woman; but I am ashamed to speak before this gentleman you have brought. I am not accustomed to see gentlemen in my rotten house."

"Never mind the gentleman, he is young, and a bachelor, and wants to make the acquaintance of a nice lady like you, Urana," replied Bawasab, with a conciliatory mischievous grin.

We soon got up the ladder; and are seated on a mat. The ever ready sree box is placed before us, and of this Bawasab partakes. Urana, on a closer acquaintance, was seen to be a

withered old hag, whose capacious mouth was stuck full of sree and tobacco. Her black locks hung down in disorder; and her hands were discoloured with a harmless, but ugly species of leprosy,—a disease common to the country. Two or three of her sons lay on mats behind her, making up for want of the last night's sleep; but one rises suddenly, startled at the unusual visitors. The mother allays his suspicions with a low word or two, so he brightens up and welcomes us with the usual *tabbeh*.

Now business commences, and Bawasab is the most innocent, affectionate, agreeable man possible. He addresses the old lady as mother, and the sons as brothers. He says he has a great affection for them,—as much as for his nearest relatives, not even excepting his own sisters. His flattery is open and undisguised, nor is it taken amiss; for he only indulged in Oriental hyperbole. He goes on to say that he has a great desire to see them rich, to put them in possession of money; but alas! he has had sore to do with his white master in Georgetown to get any for them. He has a bag of dollars under his waist, and slowly he lets one or two drop on the floor, and proceeds to suggest to *his* mother what she could do with a bag of dollars all to herself. Urana becomes amiable; her sons shake themselves out of sleep; and their eyes are seen to be bound by the sight of the universal dollar. Bawasab knows how far he can go; he makes his approaches slowly, now holding Urana's hand be-

tween his own. No scruples against her disease shock him ; and he softly suggests how fifty dollars would give her no end of fine clothes for herself, and opium for her sons to smoke. She could have these luxuries easily by parting with a useless bit of land and an old house. The dollars now roll out on Bawasab's lap. The sons' eyes glisten ; they would steal them if they dare. Urana wavers, and consults with her sons in a dialect unintelligible to us. She replies, "One hundred, and the land is yours." Bawasab sees his point is gained, so he haggles, draws up his money tight, and asks her if she would let him make but one offer. He essays to rise : but Urana holds him fast, and tells him he may make one offer. "Fifty-one dollars," says Bawasab, "and I will dare to speak to my master, but not one *doit* more." She does not accept the offer ; but yet holds his hand, and relaxes not her grasp. The dollars unfold themselves again, and they are viewed in silence. The dollars, the almighty dollars left to themselves, produce a magic effect. The sons ruminate over the quantity of risks from broken bones, when pursuing their avocations, these dollars will save them, and the length of time they will be able to enjoy themselves in the opium smoker's paradise. They now take an active part in the treaty ; and, after much bantering, joking, doubling, and twisting, the bargain is struck at fifty-one dollars twenty-five pice, and twenty dollars is at once paid down as earnest money before witnesses,

the remainder to be paid on the transfer being made at the collector's office.

As a mere witness to the transaction, it struck me as being unique and characteristic. It proved that the power of wealth was universal, and the weakness of vice was all-pervading, also that these bronze and copper-coloured individuals were moved by the same motives as their fellow-creatures the white men—and urged on by the same necessities.

Bawasab did not now tarry ; but, taking a most affectionate leave, mounted the elephant, and ere he was well out of sight chuckled over the fine stroke of business he had effected for his white master in Penang. The bargain took him an hour to make ; but as Bawasab remarked, *if you wish to deal with these people you must not hurry them.*

CHAPTER XX.

OAMUT.

OAMUT was a true Malay ; and, as I was more in contact with him than with any other person for a whole year, I will describe him as well as I am able. At this time, I may say, I lived entirely amongst the Malays, seldom seeing Europeans. My conversation was in Malay, and current events were discussed in that language.

Oamut might stand about five feet four inches. He dressed in the usual manner of Malays, viz., in the *sarong* (plaid), *saluar* (trousers), and *baju* (coat). On his head he wore a Bugis handkerchief ; and on his feet he wore sandals. By his side was a kris, with which he never parted for a moment. At a distance he might have been taken for a Scottish highlander ; when near, his copper-coloured skin, black twinkling eyes, Mongolian physiognomy, proved that he was a Malay. He was independent in his tone, but respectful in his manners ; and, during my long intercourse with him, he neither betrayed a tincture of low breeding, nor a sign of

loose and improper thoughts. Indeed his sense was delicate and keen: his ideas had a tone of high standard. He was unmindful of money for any other object than what was necessary to maintain himself and family. He gradually commanded my friendship. I felt I could not but respect him. His conversation was intelligent on the affairs of the surrounding states; his information was deep in the characteristics of his own race; and his descriptions of past and passing events interesting and instructive. Yet he could neither read nor write—a defect he bewailed with much sorrow. His age might have been forty-seven to fifty. In our many rambles and rides together, he used to relate the history of his own life; and as an illustration of these social incidents I will put down what I can remember.

He was born near *Bukit Tingah*, on the *Juru*¹ river; he once pointed out to me the remnant of his father's cocoa-nut grove, standing in the midst of a plain of *lalang* (high grass) close to the mangrove jungle. Now only three trees served as a mark of the spot—a circumstance which drew a sigh from the Malay; for these melancholy remembrances brought back the memory of a doting father and fond mother, as he knew them in his sunshine of childhood! But he soon turned aside: grave thoughts crossed his brow; for time had dispersed the members of that family, and scattered them to and fro. Oamut was a wild young man, and wanted

to see the world ; so, in a moment of unguardedness, he was caught in the meshes of an enlisting sergeant of the Ceylon Rifle Corps. Dosed with narcotics, and before seeing either father or mother, he was carried on board a ship bound for a long foreign service. "It is not wonderful," said Oamut to me, "that an *amok* takes place ; for the bereft and frenzied youths see the land of their love still in view, and are maddened at the parting." An *amok* did not occur on this occasion ; Oamut was borne off ; and he landed safely in Ceylon, was drilled and stiffened into the shape of a British soldier. He was also sent to school, but could never learn the difference between *a* and *b* ; he however progressed so far in English as to speak it, parrot-like ; but what he said was better understood by himself than by his white friends.

While in Ceylon he assisted in the reduction of the hill tribes ; and on one occasion stuck by his wounded captain for three days. He concealed him in the jungle, and bore him out in safety. This gave Oamut a step ; but he was *bodo* (unlearned), so could not be made a sergeant. He served for twenty-seven years, after which he yearned to return to his native land. He got his discharge without pension (the reason of this I could never satisfactorily learn). So he returned penniless to Pulo Pinang to find father and mother, sisters and brothers, gone ! The very posts of his father's house had rotted away.

Under these circumstances, he entered the police service, was engaged in taking a noted pirate called *Che Mat*, whom he captured in the very midst of his lurking-place, which was once pointed out to me at *Sungei Seâkup*. The bravery of the act gained Oamut a pauguluship (constableness), and great became his influence with the East India Company's official then in charge of the province (Wellesley). Nor was Oamut lax in his endeavours to please his new white master (the above official), for he hesitated not, with his assistants (though in public pay), to work at the East India Company's official's private country houses and gardens, and thus to improve that individual's properties. "What did it signify if his master were pleased, though the whole Malay world were dissatisfied?" "But," continued Oamut, "it was not the police alone that had to do work for the government official. Bands of convicts from India were pressed into the service to make roads, and to work amongst his various and distant plantations."

But notwithstanding Oamut's alacrity, an evil hour was in store for him. He had married his daughter to the nephew of the official's nonia (native mistress). This nephew gave unpardonable offence in a family squabble. Oamut's son-in-law was ejected from the back-room circle with ignominy. This offended Oamut's dignity, and he threw up his appointment in the Honourable East India Company's police service, and tendered himself to Tuanku

Mahomed Saad, then about to make his abortive attempt to drive the Siamese out of Keddah.

In his new employment, Oamut drilled the insurgents, and afterwards followed the expedition against *Sangora*, which was taken by the Malays. Here, he related, the Malay prisoners accused the Siamese of the most horrible cruelties. They would rip up the pregnant women for the mere sake of a bet as to whether the child was a male or a female; they would crush the Malay prisoners under the feet of elephants, till they were as thin as pancakes; they would impale others on the *pucho nipah* (the sprout of the nipah palm), which has a point as sharp as a spear, and which grows about six inches every day. (This death is called *mati de subo*, or death by impalement, the deepest oath uttered by the Malay.) Thus the victim would live till the sprout had grown through his stomach and he would die in the greatest and most protracted misery. Such dreadful accusations were related with a warmth that evidenced a belief on the part of the listener; but I often hoped that they were the mere suggestions of over hatred—a proof of how the oriental can hate. I fear, however, the practice was too well known to all native governments. Certain it is that if the Siamese were guilty—or even thought guilty—of such abominations, the Malays would not be slow in taking a full revenge in kind. I shudder for the victims on either side. Sherrard Osborne has borne witness to the cruel

butchery of the Siamese prisoners by Tuanku Mahomed Saad, prior to his flight from Keddah. Oamut went on to relate that, with success, the Malay chieftain became arrogant and exacting; he krised the suspected and flogged the dilatory amongst his army. This did not suit Oamut's taste, so he took the first opportunity to take his *congé*, and returned, with many other fugitives, to the secure refuge of the British settlement. When he crossed the border, he was half-naked, half-starved, worn out, and dejected. In this condition he sought his daughter's house, where he found a tender asylum.

Having offended the East India Company's chief official, he held himself in cover till he sought the powerful protection of an independent member of the European community, who, knowing Oamut's antecedents, extended a helping hand "to raise him," as he used to say, "from the dust."

I have mentioned that he never parted with his kris, this was partly from fear of assassination, partly from pride. The Malays in British territory are disarmed; but, under the wing of his European friend, Oamut was not interfered with by the native police. The law was weak here. He used to say that as a police officer he had to bring many a man to justice, of whom some were hanged and others were transported to Bombay. The friends of those were but too eager for revenge; and was he to allow himself to be krised, without the means of defending

himself? Further, he had so offended the Nonia of the East India Company's chief official that hundreds at her bidding would be willing to make a quiet end of him. Thus he always walked in fear of treachery, for he was aware of the habits of his countrymen. He said, "The government of the English is *odil* (just), their judges will neither take bribes nor flattery; but here it is only an English government in name. The nonia is the real *rajah* (ruler). All the lawsuits are carried on in the back rooms of the East India Company's official's house; and the man that can make the nonia the largest present is sure to gain his cause when it comes to be tried. Before court days," he continued, "I have seen dozens of Chinese and twenties of Klings carrying up ducks and fowls fruit and dollars as presents to the nonia, so what justice can there be when this is allowed? All the *anyia* and *fetina* (oppression and defamation) that takes place, come from these back rooms; for there the nonia can have her say when no one else can.

"Look at this," he would continue, "and you will easily understand how oppression and defamation are so rife. The nonia's brothers, brothers-in-law, and cousins occupy the high offices of government. They sit at every corner of the hall of justice, of the police offices, and of the land departments. A word cannot be uttered but it is detailed to the nonia. And how are her relations paid for their services? It is not the Company's wages of five or ten dollars a month that keeps up their gigs, horses, pleasure

gardens, and women,—but it is the bribes taken and the unjust actions committed. The paddy (rice) field of the ryot is seized for back rents, and sold for bagatelles to these sycophants, for no one dare bid against them. Look at the finest lands in *Penaga*! don't they belong to the nonia's brother, and how was *Meralibby* cast out from house and estate and turned out to poverty and wretchedness, his sons to the slave market and his daughters to the brothels? It was by such actions as these."

Here Oamut had got his whole heart out, and exhausted his energy—so he would ask leave to retire for the day.

I relate this man's story—first, because I know it to be true, and, secondly, to *give the lie* to those writers on India who ascribe the early influence of the Company's officers to their illicit connections with native women. These connections may have lowered them to the level of a degenerate people, and enabled them to mix themselves up in all their petty and unworthy intrigues—but *these connections, when made by men in power, not only depraved the holder of office in the eyes of the natives; but, as was the case in the above instance, were the cause of much injustice and oppression.*

That the above official should have employed the police and convicts in working on his own properties and plantations, was at that time akin to the system, that prevailed a quarter of a century previously. All Members of Council were allowed at the public ex-

pense 300 convicts for their private use, and such private European inhabitants as had interest with the Government were also allowed convicts for their private use. These "*good old times*" have passed away, and not too soon.

1. The Juru River in Province Wellesley is spelt Juroo on Thomson's map, and later spelt Jurvo.

CHAPTER XXI.

OPPRESSIONS.

ONE fine morning I was ready mounted on one of the elephants, with Oamut by my side. I intended to have a look at the interior, so I carried him with me to inform me of the various localities and topics of local interest. We first kept along the shore for several miles till the road turned in at *Tulloh Ramis* for *Sungei Puyoh* and *Bagan Lalang*, at which latter place the Prye river was crossed. As we wended along the beach, I observed two rows of young cocoa nuts in front of the old tall groves of the villages. I asked Oamut what this meant?

"Why," said he, "*tuan*, these two rows belong to the East India Company's chief official, and those behind to the Malays; and this is the state of the case, for, for four miles along, the sea frontage belongs to the East India Company's chief official, and behind that is sometimes his own land, sometimes the land of natives."

"But," inquired I, "were these numerous villagers not in possession of the sea frontage before

the East India Company's chief official came to this country at all, for I see the villagers' trees are old ones?"

"Oh, yes," said Oamut, "but he took the frontage from them, and appropriated it to himself, and this was done for two reasons; first, because coconuts thrive best on the sea-shore, as you may easily perceive; and, secondly, he wanted to protect his private ferries."

"What ferries, Oamut?" said I.

"The ferries of Tulloh Ramis," said Oamut; "don't you know, sir, that no person is allowed to land all along this beach, unless he comes in the East India Company's chief official's private ferry-boats? If they did land they would be pounced on by the police, and put into chokee (jail)."

"Monstrous!" said I. "This cannot be the case in British territory?"

"Monstrous or not," said Oamut, "it is the case. The fare is four cents to go across to the *Tanjong* (George Town), and the East India Company's official takes half of that to his private use. It is hard on the servants of Allah (God) but *apa bulih boat* (what can be done)? The 60,000 inhabitants of the province must submit, for the power of the white man is great."

"But," Oamut continued, "the money loss is not the greatest, the loss of lives has been great, for during the *musim barat* (west monsoon), the waves are high here, and the landing is safer at *Bagan*

Jermal. "The people submit quietly; but they murmur deeply."

This struck me as a new phase in a mercantile company's government of a country. I was filled with not a little indignation as I turned from the monopolised shore and proceeded inland, till we came to the ferry at *Bayan Lalang*. Here was a police-station, a police-officer, and a ferry boat.

"Is this a public ferry," said I, to Oamut.

"No," said he, "it belongs to the East India Company's chief official,¹ whose land commands the river and road. His land is taken so as to extend over the sand ridge into either swamp, so no traffic can take place without going over his ground. So the charge is not for crossing the river, but for going through the East India Company's official's private property. You will see that this police-officer will demand two cents from each of us, and twelve cents for the elephant, for going across the land, and then he will be so obliging as to put us across the river for nothing."

"And who pays the policeman for his service?" said I, laughing.

"Oh," said Oamut, "the public treasury does that."

"Then I am to understand that the treasury pays the policeman to collect the tolls of a private ferry?"

"Yes, just so," said Oamut, "and you will now have to pay yourself by way of proof, before you can reach the other side."

Oamut's information proved to be correct. In justice to the native policeman, I must state that he was polite in the extreme, he regretted that it was his misfortune to charge a white gentleman for crossing so small a bit of ground, but he would be delighted to put me across the river for nothing.

"*Apa bulih boat,*" said he, "it is the East India Company's official's orders."

Having paid the impost, and crossed safely, we proceeded till we came to two cross roads, near two pretty hills covered with the most beautiful nutmeg plantations. These hills were situated in the centre of a vast plain waving with golden rice crops. Here our attention was arrested by a man sitting by the way, and uttering loud lamentations. The nearer we approached him, the louder his lamentations grew.

"Why this grief?" I asked Oamut.

"Let us stop, and then you can ask *Che Kota* yourself," said he. "He will tell you all about it." So I descended and asked what ailed him.

"Oh," said *Che Kota*, "a white man asks the cause of my misery? Who should know better than the white man. All my misfortunes have come upon me through the *anyia* (oppression) of the white ruler of this country. That little hill, that beautiful little hill, like to an island in the sea; that hill called *Bukit Polandok* (moose-deer hill), was once mine."

"Whose is it now?" inquired I.

“Ayah, the East India Company’s chief official has taken it, he has cut down my *serree* gardens, he has drained my paddy fields, he has cleared and felled my *durian*, *mangostan*, *mangoe*, and *champada* trees. All, all are gone. Now the bare earth remains, which he has planted with his own nutmeg trees. I am undone. The spirit has gone from me. I am like the lonely stork sitting in the midst of a *pyah propoh* (reedy swamp); no one to cheer me, no one to look kindly on me. The large durian with its hundred branches loaded with fruit no longer gugor (fall), so that my children may eat and be merry. All is swept away, my flesh is wasted, and my bones are rotten.”

Here his lamentation vied in sublimity with the Psalmist, where he cries* “My days are consumed like smoke, and my bones are burned as a hearth. My heart is smitten and withered like grass, so that I forget to eat my bread. By reason of the voice of my groaning, my bones cleave to my skin. I am like a pelican of the wilderness, I am like an owl of the desert, I watch and am as a sparrow on the house top. I have eaten ashes like bread, and mingled my drink with weeping.”

“My wife is gone, and my children are the slaves of the stranger.”

Here he was overpowered with emotion, and tears fell fast. I gave him some money, and tried to console him as well as I could; but now a large crowd

* See Psalm cii.

had gathered and stood around. Their complaints were much to the same purpose as Che Kota's, and were to this effect, that the other hill, which is the larger of the two, and is called *Bakit Merah* (red hill), was once covered with fruit groves the property of the native inhabitants. These had now been cut down and appropriated to the private use of the East India Company's chief official, who had it planted out with nutmeg trees.

One of these natives appeared a peculiar object of charity; he was an old man upwards of eighty years of age. His name has escaped my memory. But I well recollect another native, called Jahiah, a tall, powerful man; he stepped forward from amongst the crowd and asked the favour if I would only go with him and see how his paddy fields had been wrested from him, and how only a small remnant remained to him. I did not refuse, so I left the elephant and walked with Jahiah one or two miles along an embankment. This embankment was now the boundary of the East India Company's official, and it was seen to run through the middle of the Malay inhabitant's fields. Jahiah carried me across the boggy parts of the wood, as he would carry a child. I viewed his little remnant, which had a small cottage on it, surrounded by a few plantain trees. On his small remnant he had to support a wife and children. I burned with shame when I saw the larger portion that had been taken from him; for

this he had cleared with his own hands, labouring under a burning sun. He showed me the land order to clear the piece, given by the same East India Company's official that wrested the land after his labour had made it valuable. Here was a *strong brave man to make an enemy of*, by subjecting him to gross injury. I could not but recur to Oamut's remark that the *murmurs were deep; I thought also they might be dangerous.*

1. This was doubtless Lieut.-Col. James Low, ex-Madras Army, who between 1823 and 1840 was in charge of Province Wellesley. He is chiefly remembered for the treaty he negotiated with the Malay state of Perak which saved that state from Thai domination but which earned him an official reprimand.

CHAPTER XXII.

DESPOTIC OFFICIALISM.

STRANGE ride this morning; the tales in Mill's *History of British India* were having practical elucidation, the surmises of the simple country folks at home were being realized, when they surveyed the ill-gotten wealth of the yellow, sleepless, snappish nabobs that from time to time sat down in old haunted rural mansions to linger and die. I felt I was now actually poaching on forbidden preserves,—for these regions were forbidden to Englishmen till the year 1833, and I had stumbled unawares on the very heart of a monstrous, loathsome despotism.

This was a wholesale way of getting rich,—first the valuable sea frontage is pounced upon; second the sea highway between one British settlement and another, containing 40,000 and 60,000 inhabitants, is monopolised for the private benefit of an East India Company's official; third, the river dividing the province is closed to the public and monopolized in the same manner; and, lastly, the

crowning information of this morning's ride, the inhabitants are driven wholesale from their patri-monies! I now write down what I saw with my own eyes and heard with my own ears. It is just possible the Malays might have been the victims of legal quibbles, but the hard, stubborn facts remained the same,—they were ousted from their houses and lands. A government court of inquiry would have settled these points; or a court of justice would have rejected or vindicated the claims of the Malays. As far as I am aware, no investigation ever took place! The Malays, at my suggestion, did go over to lay their complaints before Sir George Bonham¹; but I fear they never obtained redress. The belted peons around his office would never have allowed a number of ragged Malays to approach his august presence. They also proceeded to the Court of Judicature, but failed here also; they could not pay for an advocate, and were not allowed to plead *in formâ pauperis*.

Such doings would be impossible in Great Britain, here they were more than probable. Nay, the native rajahs of Malayan states daily and hourly commit such acts on their people. Then, here was an East India Company's official in the position of a Malayan rajah unchecked and uncontrolled,—how could he, a European gentleman, be capable of such transactions? Simply in this way. He no doubt had the feelings of a white man forty years previously;

but he was weak-minded, and had, *for thirty years, been held under native influences*. Having succumbed to such trammels, he had become an Anglo-Hindoo rajah, and had so conformed to the ideas of that class, that he imbibed their prejudices, and indulged in their oppressiveness and venality.

1. Sir Samuel George Bonham, KCB, was Governor of the Straits Settlements from 1836 to 1843, and later Governor of Hong Kong. See also Chapter XXXV.

CHAPTER XXIII.

CHE KOTA.

CHE KOTA signifies "him of the fort," and whether Che Kota's had been that same fort that is to be seen marked in Lieutenant Woare's chart of Penang, I do not know. At all events a fort or stockade is shown to have crowned the summit of Bukit Palandah in the year 1832. By referring to Moor's *Notices of the Indian Archipelago*—a work that I have not seen for many years—there will be found a map of Province Wellesley by Fletcher, a government surveyor. In that map the boundary of Province Wellesley is clearly depicted. That boundary shows the extent of land bought from the Rajah of Keddah, but which scarcely takes in Permatang Pau. Both Bukit Palandah and Bukit Merah, were, at that time, in Malayan territory. It was not till the 6th of April, 1832, that the boundary was extended so as to include those two hills. This was done after the insurrection of Tuanku Kudin, by which time the East India Company had ac-

known the supremacy of Siam over Keddah, so that it was by Siam's consent that the boundary was extended. So much is necessary to be related before dealing with Che Kota's claim, and that of others similarly situated.

Colonel Law's *History of the British Colonies in the Straits* has a short sentence connected with this subject. It is to this effect: A large portion of the central district (of Province Wellesley), viz., Prye, was excited to rebellion, and a party of police proceeding on general duty under a small escort, were treacherously waylaid, and a constable, three sepoys, and some peons were murdered. This circumstance happened in August 1830, while the land was Malayan, and two years prior to its being ceded to the East India Company by Siam, the conqueror of Keddah. Then what were these native servants of the East India Company doing over the border, for we were neither at war with Keddah nor with Siam. Che Kota and my Malay informants said "that they were executing warrants for refusal to pay taxes to the East India Company's official." They owed no allegiance to the British crown, they did not reside in British territory, therefore they refused to pay taxes, and resisted when the military were sent out to coerce. Che Kota himself was absent from the fray, but his brother was in it—so that was enough. The Company's native servants had been resisted and shot, so all must fly from vengeance that would too surely overtake the villagers indiscriminately.

Some ran to Perok, some to Patani, and the flourishing fruit groves, the fertile rice-fields were deserted.

In the meantime, the frontier of the British is pushed beyond the deserted homes of these Malays by the sanction of the Siamese. The insurrection of Tuanku Kudin is put down, and peace and security reign again. The East India Company's chief official has long coveted these two hills, and now is his opportunity, he asks for a grant of them and the adjacent lands from the governor of the Straits settlements. This was willingly acceded to by that high functionary, under the impression that the lands were waste, without rice-fields or fruit gardens on them. The hills are taken possession of accordingly, the fruit groves are cut down and destroyed, and nutmeg gardens planted in their stead.

Now Che Kota and others, knowing themselves to be innocent of blood, return only to see their homes and estates in other's hands, and not a vestige of their patrimonies remaining to them. A melancholy return from exile, this! The same official that drove them out, had now legal possession of *these estates under the great seal of the State*. Such is a plain statement of Che Kota's grievance.

That of Jahiah and others had a different aspect. He and others fled from Keddab, and sought an asylum within British territory from the conquering Siamese cruelties. They proceeded to the East India Company's chief official's office, and obtained a *surat tabas tabang* (occupation certificate) for lands near

Bukit Nurah. The land was under high forest, so it was cleared with great personal labour. The above certificate, by law, entitled the holder to a grant, on the ground being put under cultivation. Thus, under the authority of the East India Company's official, they occupied the soil, cleared it, planted it, built houses on it, with the hope of enjoying the fruits of their labour in company with their wives and little ones. Thus the whole surrounding lands were cleared from forest under the daily inspection of the same East India Company's chief official. He never hinted to a single occupant, that he held a grant over all their homes, till the forest had been cut down, and the lands made into rice-fields, and thus rendered valuable. Then suddenly, he sent a surveyor to mark out his square block, which done, a *posse* of convicts were set on to build a great embankment round the whole. Thus the Malay settlers found themselves suddenly bereft of their all in this world. And I happened to stumble on them in the midst of their consternation.

A sudden tremor seems to have affected the whole population—they held up their certificates of occupation to the East India Company's official, while he pointed out to them his superior title by grant from the governor. They soon saw it was of no avail to dispute with the holder of despotic power against his own personal interests. They knew nothing of constitutional resistance, such as may be seen in European countries; the only resistance they could

think of was by arms. But that latter resistance involved terrible results, the gallows of the English, or the sword of the Siamese. They bore their grievances, therefore, in silent sorrow—for justice was never rendered them.

By the Honourable East India Company, the author of their sorrow was honoured, advanced, and pensioned—but what did this avail him? The curse of a higher power fell on him. *His home was blighted even more awfully than was Che Kota's, and his estates passed into the hands of strangers.*

1. This would be the same Lieut.-Col. James Low mentioned earlier in Chapter XXI. Low wrote numerous articles on the history of the Straits Settlements, the Malay Peninsula and Siam which were published in the *Journal of the Indian Archipelago*.

CHAPTER XXIV.

DISCLOSURES AND REFLECTIONS.

BEING delayed by crowds of natives, we did not arrive at Permatang Passeir before dark, and here Oamut and I lodged with his son-in-law,—a young handsome Malay. We were up by daylight next morning, and walked to a place called Kota, the residence of a Malay chief, situated just beyond the boundary of British territory. Here I called on Tuanku Abdulla; and, after some slight conversation, retired to view the village, or rather hamlet. Kota always had a bad reputation; for here all the notorious characters congregated on a commanding centre. From hence they could issue and commit depredations on the well-cultivated plains of Province Wellesley; there they could safely dispose of their ill-gotten goods, and spend the proceeds in gambling, cock-fighting, and opium-smoking. Here I met many of the Province Wellesley Malays well known to me, indulging in a spell of dissipation at the three favourite pastimes of the Malays. Oamut

remarked that here they are like buffaloes wasting their substance on those pigs of Chinamen, who impose upon their weaknesses. I have known Malays to be so fond of gambling that they would gamble away their clothes, children, and at last their wives, till they had nothing but their skin to cover them. We left this den of iniquity, and, said Oamut, quietly, "Keep your pistol cocked and ready, *tuan*, when you see me uncover my *kris*, as we pass through the *blukar* (scrub), for many a man have I known to be set upon here for far less than we are supposed to carry upon us." We passed over the boundary, however, all safe; and, after a breakfast of rice, curried fowl, and plantain, we mounted the elephant and set out on our journey to Bukit Moratajam.

On leaving Permatang Passeir, we had to pass over a long swamp filled with dead trees—so we had an opportunity of watching the cautious sagacity of our noble animal. At soft parts, he would break off a branch of a tree, and lay it forward with his trunk, press on it well with his fore feet, before moving his hinder legs. At other parts, he would push over a tree in the direction he was going, and thus make a bridge for himself to pass along. This was tedious, though interesting work; and I was glad when we arrived on terra firma. Oamut said, "The elephant represents wisdom, the buffalo honesty, the tiger ferocity, the snake stealth, the alligator voraciousness: in man all these attri-

butes are combined, so he is more feared than them all put together."

We soon rose over the plain, and found ourselves on the top of a hill called Bukit Indramuda, covered with clove trees and plantain gardens, the property of some enterprising Chinese settlers. Here we could scan the whole province from the Krea to the Muda.¹ Selecting remarkable spots, I asked Oamut whose they were. "That," said he, "is Aurgading, a nutmeg estate of the East India Company's chief official; and that is the ferry station of Aurgading, the private property of the same official; and that is Bukit Jelutong, the coffee plantation of the same official; and that is Tulloh Ramis, the cocoa-nut estate of the same official—it extends from Bagan Luar to Tulloh Ayer Tawar, near six or seven miles; and that in the distance is Kota Aur, another private ferry of the same official—it commands the great northern road, by which all the population must pass; and that pretty hill to the south is Bukit Tamboon,² another nutmeg estate of the same official; and that low hill is Tasseh an intended sugar plantation of the same official."

"Why," said I, "Oamut, stop! Your official has everything, and nobody anything. *Who can have any interest in supporting the State?*"

We proceeded on slowly, and I found myself moralizing. Is this a type of the government of the East India Company? It cannot be. But granted

that it is, then their justice must be like unto a Dutch nutmeg—when monopolized, one shilling per pound, when free, one farthing per pound, and then easily obtainable. But then there is this difference, a nutmeg is a luxury—justice a necessity. But whence the parallel? Here it is. An East India Company's governor at 5000*l.* per annum, not to be approached; a resident councillor at 2400*l.* per annum, not to be seen; a judge at 4500*l.* per annum, not to be reached. Truly this East India Company's service is the finest in the world for those who are in it. But what are the people the better for all this, when justice is so precious?

Oamut nudged me on the side and said, "Here is Kubong Simang—a dismal swamp that we must pass through." We descended at a Malay hut, and found an old man, his wife and three children, in an extreme state of poverty. They subsisted on a small garden of plantains, whose fruit they sold to passers by. The man was afflicted with elephantiasis in both legs, and great ulcers broke out over each instep. Oh, horrible! I shuddered. He could barely walk, yet the calm, placid countenance of that man was a bright lesson in the virtue of resignation.

"Oamut," I asked, "how does this man live?"

Said he, "His wife keeps him."

"How?"

"She chunkals (digs) the ground, and plants the

garden. She is rajin (smart), pandei menchari makan (clever at seeking a living). She makes enough to feed and clothe her husband and children."

"How can that be?" said I.

"Oh," said he, "she will get 300 bunches in the year from her garden, and that will bring them fifteen *ringits* (fifteen dollars), which is *chukup makan* (enough to live upon)."

"How do you make that out?" said I.

"Well," said he, "four sarongs will clothe him and her—the children require none—that makes four dollars; then two chupas a day of rice are three doits a day, or eleven dollars a year, which makes up the fifteen dollars a year. Now, what with the little fish they catch in the ditches and roadside puddles, they can keep body and soul together, and *that's all the servants of God should ask for.*"

This was a new system of philosophy, certainly not imported from the west.

We crossed the swamp, which was named after the aborigines (for the Malays are interlopers like the English), it being the place where they assembled at certain seasons to feast on the Tampui fruit, to drink its effervescing juices, and to get drunk to their heart's content; but this was only once a year.

As we proceeded along at a slow pace, I began again to reflect. This East India Company's official—what was he that he should hold despotic

sway over 60,000 human beings? He is part of a general system; and, in his own country, no doubt was morally and intellectually reared. What has changed his nature from the healthy, fair-play-loving Briton to the bloated tyrant? *Native connections of a low and illicit kind.* Why so? Because he has been flattered for thirty years, and flattery insidiously impairs the mind; and the climate, impairing the energy, has made flattery the more destructive. *Flattery and climate destroy the original independence of the European.* He is now under the trammels of his native connections; they are hated with a gnawing hate, and live under the fear of treachery. They suggest oppression on their marked enemies to discomfit them; and, by flattering his vanity, and pandering to his avarice, he falls a victim to their wily toils, and *the British official becomes a tyrant!* Oh, how unfit a representative of England's manly Christianity! how unlike the noble disinterestedness of England's most noble statesmen! In this case how much did not this state of affairs tend to lower the European in the native estimation, to destroy his high prestige, and to ultimately annihilate his power!

Oamut again nudged me, and awoke me to reality, for the pepper gardens of Bukit Moratajam were now in view. We proceeded to view them. He had many acquaintances amongst the Chinese here, and we stopped at the head man's house at mid-day. Here we were hospitably regaled with

rice, salt fish, tea, and sweetmeats; after which we took an early departure, being anxious to return to Kubong Boyah that evening. Leaving the elephant at Permatang Passeir, we pushed through a foot-track, then being cut through the mangrove jungle from a place called Bagan Srye. Thus we returned to the bungalow after dark.

Before parting with Oamut that night, I asked him how long Province Wellesley belonged to the British?

He said, "Upwards of a quarter of a century."

"And how was the population governed during that time?"

"By a single white official, assisted by one or two Indo-Portuguese clerks."

"Who was the ruler?"

"The nonia."

"Yes, true; but who was magistrate?"

"The East India Company's official."

"Who was coroner?"

"The East India Company's official."

"Who was surveyor-general?"

"The East India Company's official."

"Who was tax collector?"

"The East India Company's official."

"Who was commander of the troops?"

"The East India Company's official."

"Who was superintendent of roads?"

"The East India Company's official."

"Who was register of land claims?"

"The East India Company's official."

"Well, I see, Oamut, that the East India Company's official, to do justice to his charge, would require to be a demigod. How many schools are there in the province?"

"None."

"Then the East India Company's official is not schoolmaster amongst the numerous offices?"

"No; the *more ignorant the people are kept, the less trouble he thinks he will have in keeping them quiet.*"

"Have you seen any Europeans besides myself in this province?"

"Very seldom, indeed. The East India Company's official wrote to the Governor recommending that none should be allowed ingress."

"Has the Governor ever inspected this province?"

"Never, to my knowledge."

"Do appeals ever go to higher courts?"

"Very seldom, except in cases of murder. The people are afraid to question the East India Company's official's judgment, lest the nonia's creatures might be set upon them."

Happy illustration this of the benevolent and patriarchal government of the Honourable Company of Merchant Adventurers trading to the East!

1. These rivers marked the southern and northern boundaries of Province Wellesley. Krian is now spelt Kerian.

2. Thomson made a fine painting from this hill (now spelt Tambun) which is reproduced in *The Thomson Paintings* (1933).

CHAPTER XXV.

A WATER EXCURSION.

WE made a very early start one morning for a water excursion on the Prye River. The early dawn was scarcely to be distinguished in the East. Venus shone with splendour, and the Great Bear stretched its long body over the northern hemisphere. The Singapore sampan floated in the calm waters, not even a ripple broke against the sandy shore. The tall casuarina trees cast their shadows downwards in the water. It had been a calm, still night. The cool land breeze was scarcely to be detected against the wetted finger. Here lay the sampan, a model of marine architecture, a patent proof that the wave line was long known to the Malays before Scott Russell had ever been dreamt of—broadest at one-third distance from the stern, and gradually narrowing to the sharp graceful bow. Five Malays already sat in the boat at the oars and steering paddle. We loitered a little to admire the model, as far as the coming light would enable us.

At length Oamut came with the gun and the kris, and we stepped on board and sat down on comfortable Siamese cushions ready laid for us. We skirt along the sandy shore, and cross the flats of Bagun Luar. Here Oamut cries, "See that boyah (alligator)." I looked, but could not discern anything. "There he is; what a big boyah!" I was yet at fault. "Don't you see his eyes sticking above the water, and two or three knobs of his back?" said Oamat. Now I could make these things out, if they belonged to an alligator; but I doubted if these little black spots could be a living thing. We pull up to it. It makes a splash and a dive—a hideous thing, at least twelve or thirteen feet long. Forties and fifties of natives were wading breast deep over this same flat pushing their prawn nets, unscared by the horrid reptile. This apathy or resignation on their part is unaccountable to the life-loving, life-enjoying European. Their lives too often fall a sacrifice while engaged in this employment; but prawns must be had for curries and *baluchong*—two indispensables in far-eastern cuisines.

We now enter into the broad bosom of the Prye, skirted by mangrove jungle on either side. The sun now peeps over the horizon, and we pull under the shaded side, and disturb a large herd of *juletongs* (large monkeys); these cry, shake the branches, grin and leap from tree to tree, making gestures which parody humanity. I lift my gun, the Malays look annoyed. I fire, and down comes a great male,

making such piteous cries as a child would utter. Oamut said, "Don't shoot any more, sir; it is against the *adat* (custom) of the Malays to kill a monkey."

To this the steersman added, "More than that, sir, it is a *doso* (sin) to kill one's own kindred; for is not the monkey descended from our own *dato nene* (ancestors), the great chief of whom was *Handoman*, a *dewa* (demigod) of great prowess. He will bring *chelaka* (misfortune) on us, if you shoot any more."

I had as little heart to kill another monkey as any of the Malays. I have no doubt the same impulses supported their superstition and my pity. The act was too like murder, and I had qualms of conscience many days afterwards.

We glide on. We pass numerous alligators lying in the mud basking in the now rising sun. Some have their mouths wide open, as Oamut explains, for the purpose of catching flies, which settle on the tongue, and are imprisoned by a sudden collapse of the jaws. We enter a narrow creek, called *Sungei Susat*. Here we meet a boat load of Malays, one of whom had a shocking aspect. His skin was spotted with white leprosy. One half of his face and body was livid white, the other dark brown. I shuddered at his affliction. We pass, and the creek narrows. Wonderful little crabs are now seen to run over the sides and banks—scarlet, blue, green, and yellow. What beautiful little fellows! And they bear a

huge claw over their backs, as good as any two. As we approach, they dive into innumerable holes in the mud and disappear. We at length, with the rising tide, get up to the village situated on the edge of the mangrove, and bordering an immense level plain of waving corn. We secure our boat, and partake of breakfast.

The superstition of the Malays regarding Handoman (Hanuman of Hindoo mythology), who is represented in the form of a monkey, would indicate that the Keddah Malays are yet only partially Mussulmans. Still when we see our modern English believing in spirit-rapping and clairvoyance, *is it fair to say that such are only partially Christianized?* Superstition, which is a curse to the uncivilized, as it enthral's his mind, subdues his understanding, fetters his enterprise, and bears him down to the dust, even still asserts its sway over those calling themselves the most enlightened of mankind.

After breakfast, we walked out to survey the busy scene. Here were thousands of men, women, and children, busy securing their golden crops. In these rural scenes it was observed that the gentler sex were at full freedom to exhibit their countenances, there being no veils to hide a pretty face, no indications of a husband's unamiable jealousy. The paddy was being cut with the *rungum*, already mentioned, and the rice was being beaten out by the buffalo, as described in Scripture. The lands here are rich, carrying heavy crops (six conchas to

the orlong). They yielded a rent of half the crop in kind, which would amount to 2*l.* or 3*l.* sterling per acre. Yet so unsettled were these times, that land could be bought for from two to five years' purchase.

The varieties of rice are numerous, and well known to the agricultural Malay. The rice of Keddah is highly esteemed for its whiteness and flavour. The *poolcat* makes a capital *pillau*, which an eastern cook is cunning in making marvellously palatable.

CHAPTER XXVI.

ANOTHER RAID.

ACCOMPANIED by Oamut and a Malay crew, we started at 3 p.m. one day for the Jurvo River.¹ The tide was high, and the sea breeze was blowing a light gale. We hoisted our mat sail and skirted first the white beach, then the mangrove jungle. When off *Sungei Seakup*, Oamut pointed out the place where he had captured the infamous *Che Mat*, a pirate who used to pounce upon, rob, and murder the Chinese sugar boatmen, plying between *Batu Kawan* and Penang. The sea leaped joyously against the mangrove bushes, sparkling the waving leaves with delight. Our spirits were buoyant with the fine run, as we sped close along the bushy shore. As mangrove grows in several feet of water on its strange branching strutted roots, it looks like a partially submerged forest of a bright green colour; and, at high water, particularly, the sight is pleasing, but at low water the muddy flats in which it grows render its proximity then not at all inviting.

It was dark before we made the Jurvo; and, as we approached, I was struck with the tinkling bell-like noise of myriads of trumpeting insects in the jungle, now busy raising their loudest notes. The effect was rendered the more charming by the alternate rise and fall of the sounds caused by the gentle surf on the shore. We ran in and sought accommodation at a native police-station, where we slept—or rather lay—for the night, as the innumerable mosquitoes tormented us almost to madness.

We were astir early in the morning; and, after a cup of tea, we started to have a look at the country. We first had to go through some thick tall forest, when I shot a bird called the *tookang*. It carries a remarkably large bill; and, when flying, imitates the sound of a person sawing wood. We had not proceeded far before I started back at the sight of a recent print of a large tiger's foot. This was my first acquaintance with the footprint of a tiger, so I felt nervous; but, in after years, the occurrence was so common to me as to pass unnoticed.

The Malays said: "Never mind, *tuan*, that one is a *dato*; it will not harm you."

"How so?" said I.

"It is one of our ancestors, so will not meddle with mankind."

Strange idea, thought I, a remnant of the Hindoo belief in metempsychosis.

We proceeded, and arrived at a village planted in the midst of tall ancient palm and fruit trees. Here

was an old man sitting on the ground, blind, and deeply scarred over the head and face. We saluted the old man, and, after some rest, asked the cause of the scars and blindness.

"Tuan," said he, "I was a strong young man, many years ago. Since then I have been blind and useless. I was then a young man, and went up that hill to cut rattans for making matting. A tiger sprung on me, but I fought with him. I cleft his skull open with my *parang* (chopper). I have no more recollection of what occurred, but that when I awoke I heard my wife sighing. I tried to look at her; but I could not see. 'Where is the tiger?' said I, raving. My wife said 'Hush, you are very ill. The tiger is dead, and we found you after some days' search lying beside it. We thought you dead; for you were weltering in blood. We lifted you up to take you to the kramat (burying ground), but when we were washing you, life had not ebbed out, and you have revived.' The fore-claws had cleft my skull and torn out my eyes, yet *dangan tolong Allah* (with God's assistance) I lived, and am now an old man, with children and grandchildren."

Strange idea of the Malays to call so terrible a scourge as the tiger by the reverential name of "grandfather." Yet when we consider how prone uncivilized man is to propitiate the evil influences, rather than to honour the Author of all Good, we need not wonder at this.

Leaving the old man, we struck across a paddy field to *Bukit Tegunjer*, and arrived at a Malay house, stockaded and covered with dense fruit groves. Here we were civilly entertained by the Malay owner with cocoa nuts and fruit. While thus engaged, we had time to inspect the work of a Malay woman who was weaving. She had six fingers on each hand, and was busy weaving a *sarong* of a checked pattern. Her apparatus was of the rudest description, yet the web was strong and lasting.

Leaving this, we proceeded over undulating prairies of lalang, at times passing through deserted groves—at times through open spaces. We walked for several miles till we came to the mangrove jungle at the head of *Junjong Mati*. The vegetation was exuberant, yet our impressions were melancholy. Wasted by the tiger and the pirate, the whole country was depopulated. There stood the posts of the houses, and there the ancient palms and fruit groves; but all was silent as death, and the wail of the unka (ape) sounded the funeral dirge. We returned to the police station by dark.

Next morning at four o'clock we started in our boat for the head of the Juru River. It was dawn before we reached the landing place at *Bukit Ketchil*. Here the elephant was ready waiting for me. I stopped for some time with the native merchant of the place, a Jawi Pakan (Indo Malay), and we found him busy, even at that early hour, buying

and selling to the Malays. They brought sugar, rice, rattans, &c., for sale, he giving in return, opium, cloth, ironmongery, &c. His conversation was to the following effect:—

“ Well, *tuan*, I am glad to see you. I am glad to see a white man here, it shows the country is progressing, when a white man thinks it worthy of his notice. They are a bad set here; all thieves—all thieves. I have been robbed three times, burnt out twice, and stabbed once. All thieves, gamblers, cock-fighters, and opium-smokers. *Tuan*, they want to feel the *hukkum kras* (strong law) of the white man. Yes, sir, let the strong law of the white man come down to us, then I will be able to eat my rice in peace.”

Just then a customer would arrive, so his attention would be diverted to him. The Malay brought syrup.

“ What is the price of that *gula*, oh *Inchi*?”

“ Two cents a catty,” replied the Malay.

“ May I make an offer?” said the merchant.

“ Yes, oh father!” said the Malay.

“ Will you take half a cent a catty?” said the merchant.

“ No, oh father!” said the Malay, without anger.

Now they haggle for half an hour, and compound their differences by barter. The poor Malay was in the hands of the wily merchant, for he had not got his accustomed smoke of opium and the merchant knew this.

This business being disposed of, my merchant friend would continue: "These Malays are a stupid people; they are mere buffaloes, so we must drive them warily, or they are apt to toss you on their horns."

But reverting again to his ill-usage amongst them, he would say, "They are a bad set, a lazy set of thieves. I wish you white gentlemen would come and settle here, then the fear of the gallows, or banishment to Bombay, would keep them in order. I shall never be safe till the white man comes up here."

Leaving the merchant, I mounted the elephant at nine o'clock in the forenoon, and leaving Oamut to return by boat, I struck for Tasseh. While we passed over the open country I was led to a large stone having unknown characters cut out on it; and having gazed at it for some time, we struck into the high jungle; and, after a tedious journey of about seven hours, we came upon the open clearings of the Malays of *Tasseh*. Having only my gomala (elephant keeper) with me, he enlivened the journey with recounting the great dangers thereof, particularly if we fell in with a herd of elephants, whose marks were numerous, and most of all, our dangers would be increased if we fell in with a *gaja toongal* (a lone elephant). He said if we met with this we were done for, as it would catch our female elephant by the tail and hold it there till he pulled it out. However these prog-

nostications proved fallacious, and we came safely to the habitations of man.

We found that the men of the settlement had all departed, so the women were in a great fright at the unusual apparition of a white man, a *genus* they had never seen before, so we passed on, notwithstanding it was dark, till we arrived at the hut of some Chinese wood-cutters. Making our errand known, viz., lodgings for the night, we were most hospitably asked in. The gomala tethered the elephant, and such simple fare as the host had, was set before us. This was rice, salt fish, and tea. The hut was small, and he had forty or fifty coolies in his employment—these lay in pairs in their beds under mosquito curtains. Every bed had a light inside of it, and here some amused themselves by singing in high falsetto tones, others smoked tobacco, and others opium. The air of the apartment soon became fetid, steaming, and overpowering. I was accommodated with a bed to myself, and my gomala lay on a bench close by me. I lay down, but feeling smothered, I rushed out to the open air several times during the night, only to be driven back by the fear of tigers, for their foot-prints round the house were observed daily. After one of the most comfortless nights I ever spent, I hailed the early refreshing dawn with its cool land breeze. Rousing my gomala, he prepared the elephant; and, after an early breakfast, we started for *Bukit Tamboon*. Having passed through the bush, evidently full of

rhinoceroses, whose footprints were very abundant, we gained the open road. Here, tired of the elephant, I descended and walked on foot to Bukit Tamboon, which place I gained by noon. Here I engaged a canoe to carry me to *Chankat Kaledang*, and returned from thence to Bukit Tamboon by dark.

Here I engaged the canoe, with two men, to take me to *Kubong Boyah*, so we pulled all night, and got there by daylight next morning. It was a beautiful moonlight night, and lucky it was for us that no *Che Mats* were fallen in with. These excursions were not without the excitement of danger, as may be inferred. I may mention that the very man that paddled me down the *Juwjong Idup* was next day whisked off his canoe by the tail of an alligator, and devoured alive. The alligator sunk to the bottom, but the effervescence of the dead body made the monster rise to the surface two days afterwards, when it was caught, and brought on shore. When opened, the body of the man was found to be perfectly whole, excepting that his nose had decomposed and disappeared.

At a subsequent visit to Tasseh, I was joined by an old and intimate friend.² On this occasion we had a Malay house to stop in, and when so housed, it rained for three days continuously, so that we could not go out. It was there that I first felt the power of Shakspeare, which my friend read with great discernment and feeling. How often have I

dwelt on that little episode of life! Our Malay retainers showed great care of us; they were well armed and lay around us. And why so? may be asked. The common fear of treachery! And was this groundless? No. A week later, two other Europeans made their way to the same place; and, at dead of night, were attacked, the one being murdered, the other left for dead.

It was in such excursions as these that I became acquainted with every nook and corner of the province, from *Krean* to *Muda*, and by which I made extensive acquaintance with the native landholders, tradesmen, and planters. Being then the only non-official European resident in the province, I had free and unfettered access to the confidence and sympathies of the people. I found the general population while steeped in ignorance, poverty, and superstition, possessed of many amiable characteristics. They were invariably civil and obliging in their demeanour. No doubt, in the back-lying parts, thieves and petty pirates, and even murderers, abounded; but, in the cultivated districts, the people were quiet and orderly. Their habits and customs might be repugnant to our European moral code; but is that not as it always has been from time immemorial? I could not but feel that here was a grand field for a benevolent and philanthropic government. A small portion of the knowledge of the arts and sciences imparted to the people, would have afforded many advantages to the governors

and the governed; even the knowledge of reading and writing would have been a great boon to the population in increasing their powers of observation, enlarging their experience, and generally in improving their condition. A retrogressive government might fear this, an *intelligent and vigorous one would cherish it.*

1. Spelt Juroo on Thomson's map.

2. I.e. J. R. Logan. In a fine tribute to Logan published in 1881, Thomson reveals that Logan was his companion at Tasseh and on other journeys in Malaya. James Richardson Logan had been at school with Thomson and practised as a lawyer in Penang and Singapore. He was to become famous as the founder of the *Journal of the Indian Archipelago* to which he made so many contributions himself that it became known as Logan's Journal. He was also editor of the *Penang Gazette*.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE BOAR-HUNT.

THE locality of *Subrang Prye* was infested with the wild hog,—so much so that attempts at planting were fruitless; what was put into the ground to-day, was sure to be uprooted at night. This led to general hunts of the destructive animals. The natives having plenty leisure on their hands, were fond of the excitement of a boar-hunt, so they speedily responded to the call of *hambat babi* (pig-driving). *Toh Bakker* was called in to consult with us as to the getting up of a grand hunt behind *Bagan Luar*. He was said to be skilled in devices for effecting their destruction, so his opinion was to be taken, and his counsel was to be followed. He said that there was only one bear he could not engage to destroy, as no *hikmat* (contrivance) of his, or any other man's could ever entrap it. It was *betuah* (invulnerable) to muskets and blunderbusses, as long as it had a *jangeer gading* (an ivory chain) on its snout. If it could possibly be caught with that off its nose, it might be taken; but, as it only put the

chain off when feeding at night-time, there was little chance of its thus being taken at fault. "However, all others," he said, "I know how to destroy, and that in a way I will soon describe to you. The first thing is to make two long fences, running up to a point. At the point we place strong frames for the animals to rush through; and now it is, in the instant of their passing through, that they meet with inevitable destruction; for in the frame are fixed four sharp *sabit* (blades), which rip up the animal in an instant." Thus instructed, I had the work prepared, under Toh Bakker's instructions, and invited several personal friends on a set day,—that day having been first named a lucky one by Toh Bakker. We collected numerous Malays to beat the bush, and, at the time appointed, mounting our elephants, we arrived at the scene. It was in a thick copse-wood, where the wild hog abounded. We had a small space cleared for the animals to pass before arriving at the frame, so that we might have a shot by way of excitement and practice. We dismounted from the elephants, and sat on some trees whose branches were cut so as to afford a seat. The bush-beaters having collected to the number of two or three hundred, commenced at the further end with a yell and din that soon brought the animals our way; and, as they approached, we were all on the *qui vive*. First a small panther leaped across the space. Several guns were fired at him, but he escaped; and, as he leapt over the frames, he was

not injured. Not so with the wild hogs; boars, swine, and pigs rushed past,—many of them being hit before,—and madly plunged into the bladed frames, on the outer side of which they lay, cut up on four sides, weltering in their blood.

The Malays, being Mahomedans, would not touch the slain animals; but the Chinese greedily carried off the carcasses. We reserved one small one for our own table, which, on being carried home, was soon cut up into joints and curries. This made no bad change from the usual diet of fowl and fish.

A dinner of this sort was always much enjoyed in India. The free and frank intercourse of Europeans, and their hilarity and *abandon*, provided the best relish to a somewhat simple fare. "Bass's best" flowed pretty freely on such occasions, sharpening the wits and sustaining a constant flow of joke, song, and, not unfrequently, mad frolic.

At a subsequent boar-hunt to this, the affair did not end so well, a huge tusked boar having turned on the natives, ripping up two of them so badly that they had to be borne from the field on stretchers, half dead.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

REPTILES AND INSECTS.

As I had finished breakfast one morning, I was startled by the noise of men's voices and clamouring. I leapt up out of my couch and ran to the verandah. There were four men hauling along something black which I could not make out. I was not kept long in suspense, for on seeing me they called out that they had brought an alligator for me. I went down to them, and sure enough they had brought an alligator, about ten feet in length. They had him bound hand and foot with stout rattans, and thus also were his jaws firmly closed; indeed they had him so securely bound that he could scarcely move. It appeared that they had found him near the mangrove, lying gorged with food, so that he was in a dormant state. This was the secret of his having been secured and hauled along. I paid the men a dollar for the alligator, and sent it over to a scientific friend residing in Penang. This scientific friend was fond of experimenting, so the alligator had his powers completely tested.

On visiting my friend three weeks afterwards, I asked how his subject got on. "*Ee maun*," said he, with great glee, "I hardly *daur gae* near it *noo*, it jumps like a *skipjack*; but come *awa doon*, and I'll let you see some fun."

It appears my friend had got an hour's amusement daily, before going to breakfast, by setting his bull terrier at the alligator. At first all the barking and biting of the dog could not move him, now he had only to go within five yards to excite the monster to such an extent as to bear out my friend's practical description. Though still tied and bound as the Malays had brought it to me, by twisting and jerking its body it could throw itself several yards up in the air, and great was the difficulty the terrier had in avoiding blows from the animal's tail,—and I can aver that a switch from this would have been enough for poor "Pepper." Such was the state of the reptile, after being *three weeks without food*. Soon after this it was destroyed, and its stuffed body graced my Scotch friend's studio for many a day.

Not long after this occurred, the Malays fell across a boa-constrictor in the same state of stupor. They made a running noose, and threw it over its head; and, in this manner, they hauled it along to my bungalow. Its length was nearly fifteen feet, and an immense swelling in its middle, showed that it was gorged with some large animal. It lay as if it were lifeless, so I set the Malays to rip up its stomach. This they quickly did with their *pisau rauts*

(peculiar knives), and out fell a full grown wild hog, entirely whole, excepting a little flesh from off its nose. To our astonishment the serpent lay perfectly dormant—a physiological fact that doctors may account for. On the Chinese hearing of the serpent, they all assembled from the village and bought it from the Malays to carry off home. It appeared that they highly relished it as an article of food. A brahm, a Malay, explained to me the manner in which the boa-constrictor catches the wild hog. The hog makes a nest for itself in the scrub; in which it lies during daylight. The serpent finds out the nest and coils itself round the interior, so that the nest remains nearly as large as it was. The unsuspecting wild hog on entering its abode is thus caught in the folds of the serpent in a moment, and crushed to death.

One day I had gone out for a trip, and on my return found my servant lying all his length on the floor uttering wild exclamations of pain and terror. There was a great hubbub in the house; for it was full of my native neighbours. The cause of the disturbance I soon perceived was owing to the visit of a snake six feet long, now lying dead. When quiet was restored, I ascertained that, during my absence, the snake had *got into my bed*, and as the servant was about to make it, the reptile flew at him and bit him. He fled from the house in great terror, and none of the neighbours dared to go in to kill the intruder. At last an old Malay woman, taking a

switch in her hand, cautiously peered through the door, and perceiving the reptile on the floor gave it a stroke with the switch, thus breaking its back, and rendering it harmless. The bite did not prove deadly. Having sent my servant to a European physician he applied a lotion—which, if it was not the means of effecting a cure, at any rate did the patient no harm.

In the course of a few months, such were my experiences of the larger reptiles. Amongst the smaller sorts, scorpions and centipedes were numerous; and I had the misfortune to be bitten by the latter. It was a small one, so I was relieved from excessive pain in a few hours. The insects are more annoying than these, though they are not so terrible as the reptiles. The *crunqa*, or red ant, is a most disagreeable, pugnacious fellow, and excessively annoying to wood-cutters. I have seen a Malay so bitten by them, that he became a mass of ulcers, and did not recover for months. The land-leech, also, is very irritating to persons travelling in the primeval jungles; but, of all insects, the sand-fly beats everything in its tantalizing tortures. It bites through stockings, and is not to be beaten off, by smoke, or by fanning; further, its bites continue their irritation for several weeks, and sometimes break into sores. The hornet is a very numerous tribe in Penang. A few of them can kill a horse; and I believe that six of them could kill a man. I once got a sting on my right foot which

laid me up for several days; and for weeks afterwards a little walking would cause the whole foot to swell.

Of all the reptiles, the snake is most abhorrent to mankind; and these regions abound with them, both on shore and at sea. I well recollect, when leading my horse through a brook near Mount Erskine, that I was about to place my foot in the coil of a hideous snake. I perceived my danger, and gave a leap that surprised me. My hair stood on end, and I shuddered all over. The beautiful green snake is innocuous, but not so the black and mottled ones; and the sea-snakes, of the tiniest forms, are deadly. Snakes infest the bath-rooms and foundations of houses; and, in wet weather, they ascend into the upper rooms. They climb up the cables of vessels at anchor; and, not unfrequently, glide over the sleeping Lascars. The encountering of snakes is of daily occurrence to those who have rural employments; and, during moonlight nights, the horses stumble across them as you canter along the roads.

The reptiles and insects of Malaya detract much from the comforts of life. True, Europeans are seldom hurt by them; yet, the very knowledge of their existence destroys that agreeable amenity enjoyed in temperate climates. The natives, whose avocations lead them much into their tracks, suffer greatly, such as agriculturists, fishermen, and woodmen. I had almost forgotten to mention the white

ant. It is a most destructive little creature. If it once gets into a house it soon eats up all the beams. It was even accused by the East India Company's treasurer of Bencoolen of having eaten up all the dollars in his charge, iron chest and all! The Court of Directors in Leadenhall Street, fortunately for the treasurer, being in a waggish mood at the time, ordered a supply of small files to be sent out to their defaulting servant, to file the teeth of the little animals.

In this case it certainly was unduly blamed; but I can vouch for a portmanteau, filled with my best suit of black clothes, having been completely spoiled in the course of a single night. When I opened it in the morning, to my utter disgust, I found it full of the insatiable destroyers.

CHAPTER XXIX.

KEDDAH DISTURBANCES.

ALL south Asiatic nations seem to exist in a chronic state of rebellion, and their governments seem to maintain their preponderance by setting neighbouring districts at loggerheads. In order to weaken these, they cherish local antipathies, by way of gaining leisure to themselves. Anarchy is thus the rule, not the exception. Where there is no law, the strongest does as he likes. Every petty rajah, or son of a rajah, maintains his consequence by disorderly armed retainers, and the only casual relief to the subject is when these quarrel amongst themselves, for in this case the retainers have to fight their foes, instead of oppressing their fellow-countrymen. *This state of matters reduces the producing power of the populations to the minimum.* Nothing is produced but absolute necessities; no wealth is accumulated by the subjects. All are steeped in poverty, all are discontented, all hail revolution and change. The populations bear extortion and tyranny

with the most abject servility, till the culminating points are arrived at, when the smouldering flame of discontent bursts forth with spasmodic energy. *The effort is short and violent, and is succeeded by another term of dormant apathy.* The native of the tropical East has not the vigour and intelligence of the European; he can, therefore, neither combine for general protection, nor organize such a system of government as is capable of maintaining order. Thus Eastern governments, to be strong—or even useful—must of necessity be despotic. *A despotism in the hands of a just ruler is a blessing to Eastern nations—not a curse.*

Keddah was a weak Eastern state, situated at the fag end of two powerful ones, viz., the Siamese and Burmese. It was expected to serve both these masters; consequently it hated one and despised the other, and got into bad odour with both. When Burmah was stronger than Siam, it acknowledged its superiority; when Siam was stronger, it paid obeisance in that direction. The exactions, whether of men, money, tokens or symbols, that Keddah had to bear, were at the caprice of the monarchs of these countries. Keddah would have gladly propitiated either for the sake of peace; but this was not to be. Siam claimed a token—the *Bunga Mas* (golden flower),—while Burmah claimed assistance in men. What was to be done? The English were powerful;—might not Keddah rest quiet under *her* wings? Such might have been the thought when Keddah

offered Penang to Captain Light. Captain Light, on behalf of the East India Company, bought the island for a consideration; but he did not engage to protect Keddah from political enemies,—*the real object of the Malay rajah*. Some say that the island was given as a dowry to the princess of Keddah, who was said to have married Light. This fiction, no doubt, has been mixed up with the Bombay transaction of a Portuguese princess. Light would have had to be circumcised before he got a royal Musulman's daughter. This refutes the traditional idea.

Captain Light took possession of the purchased island of Penang on the 17th July, 1786. If it belonged to Siam, Siam should have protested against the transfer. This Siam did not do. Sir George Leith again, on behalf of the East India Company, bought Province Wellesley from Keddah for the sum of two thousand Spanish dollars. This happened on the 15th July, 1800, nor was this transfer opposed by action or protest on the part of Siam. If Keddah had been a province of Siam, and the Rajah of Keddah a mere vassal, these cessions of territory at distinct dates must have either been silently approved of by Siam, if not, those were the times to protest.

Keddah sent admissions of superiority to Siam, but so does Siam to China. Reasoning on the basis of these admissions, how is it that, in after years, Siam claimed more to do with Penang than

did China? Keddah had her native line of princes, son succeeding father for generations, as Siam has nephew succeeding uncle. Keddah had her written laws as Siam has. What difference was there between these two kingdoms? Merely this, Siam was strong, Keddah weak. The claims of Siam were the claims of might, not of right. Siam was jealous that Keddah had obtained an European friend and neighbour, so she determined to vex her. First she coerced Keddah to make war on *Perak*: this was in 1813. The object was to weaken both, preparatory to their being overrun. In 1821 Siam overran Keddah, and its native princes fled. She would have done the same to *Perak*, but for the fear of the English and the Dutch. Keddah was devastated, and many of her inhabitants carried off to slavery. Thousands fled into Penang and Province Wellesley. This suited the purposes of the English land proprietors; it cleared their jungles, and gave them a settled population. In 1822 the Burmese war was looming in the distance; so it was found to be English policy to propitiate Siam. Keddah relations were consequently sacrificed, and the grant of Penang and Province Wellesley was sought to be confirmed by Siam. This object was attained in 1826, under Colonel Burney's treaty with Siam.

In 1831 Tuanku Kudin, a chief of Malay royal blood, headed an insurrection against his Siamese conquerors. He was successful at first, and regained

temporary possession of his native country. But England's assistance was now given to Siam, and he was reduced. He remained by a remnant of his adherents, fifty or sixty in number, and died a hero's death in defending Keddah fort. He was overpowered by numbers, and nearly all died with him. As in the case of Sir William Wallace, the patriot's head was sent to the (Siamese) capital. Keddah was again devastated, and Province Wellesley replenished with settlers; lands rose in value, and rents ruled high. It was at this time that the East India Company's chief official took up extensive land claims. But the value of his land acquisitions met another check; for, in 1838, a man called *Tuanku Mahomed Saad*, a prince of royal blood, raised another insurrection against the Siamese, and carried many people away with him from Penang and Province Wellesley. Rents fell, and the value of land in the English settlements again became nominal. *Tuanku Mahomed Saad* drove the Siamese out of Keddah beyond Sangora; but the English and the Siamese were now allies. He was consequently beaten back, escaping only to be laid hold of by the East India Company's Government as a pirate, and to be dealt with as such. Keddah this time was utterly destroyed; its fertile plains wasted; the herds were driven off the fields, and the fruit groves were cut down; the mother fled with the infant at her breast, and the father crept through the jungles with his little

ones in his arms. Province Wellesley was again replenished with settlers, and *Englishmen speculated and grew rich on the troubles of their neighbours.* More eyes than mine have witnessed these scenes, so I dare not exaggerate. In 1786 the English settled down on a desert island near flourishing Keddah. In 1838 Keddah is itself a desert, the island Penang a very garden full of life and prosperity. I have seen the poor Keddan come to the sheds and outhouses *to lie down and die.* Others more fortunate in preserving life, were glad to labour for their bare rice only. *The actual strife of warfare is not the worst.*

Oamut used frequently to exclaim, "*Kalan rajah berclai orang ketchil benasa.*" (When princes fall out, the destruction comes on the lowly.) An appropriate illustration for the times. And shall we ascribe all these miseries to the English? Certainly not. They must lie in the first place at the door of the Rajah of Keddah, who sold Penang for a good price. He did not fully explain his connection with Siam; and, by this want of frankness, brought his country into great danger. Had he not counted on the assistance of the English (which he had no right to expect) he would have been more complacent to Siam, and averted her vengeance. Keddah would have done as she did heretofore, and submitted to exactions for the sake of peace. But the after part that England played, in assisting Siam against Keddah, was abhorrent to generosity,

not to speak of gratitude. Such a course would never have been sanctioned by the home authorities, however expedient or proper it might have appeared to the East India Company's Government of India, if they had been fully aware of the facts of the case.

CHAPTER XXX.

KEDDAH HISTORY.

AFTER I had acquired a fluent use of the language, I became curious to know the prior history of the people. For this purpose I engaged a *juru tulis* (clerk) to read to me and instruct me in Malayan literature. Amongst other books and manuscripts I was fortunate to obtain a copy of the Keddah annals,¹ at that time a rarity, though, I believe that since that time, many copies have been made, one of which is now by me. This book purported to be "*A true and faithful History of Keddah from its foundation,*" and had to be mentioned with all due respect in the presence of Malays. I will give a strictly literal translation of the first page or two, as a specimen of the style of these little copper-coloured historians, through whom the genius of the people will peep out a little also.

"IN THE NAME OF GOD the COMPASSIONATE, the MERCIFUL.

"Now it is related that during the time that the

prophet of God, Solomon, was firmly seated in his throne of the world (he ruled) over all creatures of divers kinds and races, that had been created on the earth by Almighty God (such as) mankind, jins, fairies, dewas, and mumbangs, also all kinds and races of beasts (that live) on the face thereof.

“The Lord of all worlds gave over all the things of this earth to be under the authority of the prophet of God, Solomon (to whom be peace!), that he might govern and give laws to the same.

“It was ordained that there was to be no opposition to the laws of the prophet of God, Solomon, (whether) from all the beasts which roam on the earth, or from the birds which fly in the air.

“Every creature inhabiting the numberless hills, mountains, and islands, placed in this world, were to be under the authority of the prophet of God, Solomon.” * * * *

“While the war of Sri Rama and Handoman continued on the island of Lankapuri (now Langkawi), it was desolated. Shortly after this came the Garuda (the Arabian *rhuk*), a bird of great size, whose descent was from the grandchildren of Maha Raja Rewana. So the Garuda remained there in search of food. This Garuda, during the time of Sri Rama and Handoman, was accustomed to engage in battles. Many were its supernatural gifts, in so much so that all the living creatures that fly, creep, or walk on the earth feared it.

“Now on a certain day came a hawk to the Garuda. Said he, ‘Don’t you know I can give you some news (namely) that the Rajah of Roum (Persia) has got a son, and now he intends to ask a betrothal with the daughter of the Rajah of China? These two countries are very far distant from each other, one being towards the sunrise and the other towards the sunset. Further the Rajah of Roum intends to send his son by ship.’ ‘Ay,’ said the Garuda to the hawk, ‘I heard the rumour from an old crow. He saw ambassadors carrying presents from Roum towards China, so I flew till I could see the state of affairs to be as they were represented to me, and thus satisfied myself.’ Said the hawk, ‘The Rajah of Roum designs to display his mightiness to be above that of all other princes of the world.’ Said the Garuda to the hawk, ‘How is he able to maintain all this pomp and circumstance? In my opinion he will have a downfall; but, wait a little. I will first seek an interview with the prophet of God, SOLOMON; for is he not the greatest prince of the world? If things turn out as I anticipate, I will put a stoppage to this design of the royal families of the two countries.’

“When the hawk heard the words of the Garuda, it asked leave to depart, and flew away. At the same time the Garuda ascended into the upper regions till he had surmounted the clouds, like smoke; and, in an instant, down comes the huge bird before the presence of the prophet of God,

SOLOMON. Said the Garuda, with obeisance, 'Oh prophet of God, I have heard a report that the Rajah of Roum has a son, and the Rajah of China a daughter. Now the Rajah of Roum wishes to betroth the daughter of the Rajah of China. The personal appearance of either is exceedingly handsome, and their countenances are beautiful; they are not to be equalled. Now as to the position of these two, they are so far separate, that in my opinion it is not possible for them to meet (each other).' Then said the prophet of God, SOLOMON, 'Oh Garuda, by the Lord that made me, if the pair are betrothed, you may close them in wood, or in stone; but these will not keep them apart.' The Garuda replied, 'Oh prophet of God, let me undertake the work of keeping apart the princess of China from the prince of Roum. If I do not succeed in keeping apart these two, I will remove from under the sky, and from over the earth, away from the place inhabited by mankind.' Whereupon the prophet of God, SOLOMON, replied, 'Very well, do as much as you are able; but remember, when you manage to separate these betrothed of mankind, you must come and tell me.' So the Garuda replied, 'Oh prophet of God—very good; when done.' Now the Garuda begged permission to retire from the presence of the prophet of God, SOLOMON, and flew away to the country of China. Betimes arriving in China, he scanned the whole government of the

Rajah of China, which to appearance was as the hawk reported."

Such is a specimen of the style of the Keddah annals. I may add that the prince of Roum proceeded on his voyage under the care of Marong Mahawangsa, accompanied by a great fleet, *menujoh pendoman ka benna China* (coursing with the compass towards China). As they gained the sea of Hindostan, they amused themselves *timbangan dengan bunii bedal meriam* (with the noise of firing powder from cannon).

I remember well we stopped at this, and I was heretical enough to ask questions. "Well, *juru tulis*, I see that your country is a very ancient one. Its history goes back to the times of King Solomon?"

"Oh, yes," said he, "Keddah is an ancient country."

"And I see that the birds could speak in those days?"

"Oh, yes," said he. "the birds were wiser than men; at that time the birds were accustomed to eat with plates, dishes, and chop-sticks, and behave themselves like *manushia* (mankind)."

"And I see the compass was used in those ancient times?"

"Oh, yes," said the *juru tulis*, "the compass has been handed down from our ancestors in olden times."

"And," said I, "cannons were common with you,

while Solomon's soldiers fought with swords and slings?"

"*Barankali*" (perhaps), said he, not now knowing the drift of my questions. I did not offend his feelings by expressing a further doubt.

We continued, night after night, at our translation, much of which I wrote down; but which lay for years in my desk forgotten. My business is not now to pursue this history; this has already been given to the public by an oriental scholar (Colonel Law),² but it will be interesting, so far, to relate the characteristic native account of how the kingdom of Keddah was established. The Garuda flew away to China, and picked up the princess while gathering flowers, and carried her off to the island of Lankapuri (now called Langkawi, situated off the coast of Keddah). Meanwhile the prince continued his voyage as far as the river Changong (Tenasserim); here the Garuda appeared, and raised a storm of wind, rain, thunder, and lightning, casting his vast shadow over the whole fleet. Marong Mahawangsa fired his enchanted arrow, called *ayunan*, and set him to flight, but not before the Garuda carried off three ships with him. The fleet now proceeded as far as Tavai (Tavoy). Here the Garuda appeared again, and was shot at by Marong Mahawangsa with the arrow called *Brat pura*. This set him to flight again; but, with the loss of other three vessels. The Garuda appeared again, and the disabled fleet took refuge in Mrit (Mergui).

At this place a great storm was again raised by the appearance of the Garuda, and he carried off other three vessels, the enchanted bow Prusa Sampani Gambarā, having been used by Marong Mahawangsa in vain. He then shot another arrow, which changed into the bird Jintaya, and which chased the Garuda off the field. But the prince of Roum had proceeded ahead of the fleet, which was perceived by the Garuda, as he neared the island of Lankapuri, and here he attacked and sunk the prince's ship. The prince, however, was miraculously saved by clinging to a plank for several days, and was at length washed ashore. Here he was discovered by the princess of China's attendants, and carried to a cave, and was here tended by his betrothed, the princess of China, though unknown to each other, and under her care he revived.

Meanwhile Marong Mahawangsa was overcome with grief at the loss of his royal charge, so he landed on the adjacent coast, then called Pulo Srai (the present Keddah). Here he was met by the natives of the tribe Girgassi, who elected him as their rajah, and here he built a palace called Lankasuka (region of delight). Having established his government, people from abroad came to dwell under his rule. Trade and commerce flourished, owing to the prudence, liberality, wisdom, and justice of Marong Mahawangsa.

Thus, according to traditional history, the little

Malay kingdom of Keddah was founded as far back as the times of King Solomon. The history of Keddah will thus be seen to have much fable amongst its grains of truth, and yet it is interesting to the Oriental archæologist. Indeed the history has been of political importance, and has been quoted over and over again to maintain opposite policies. The same chapters and verses have been appealed to by opposite factions to support their jarring interests or theories. Colonel Law is of opinion that the book dates as far back as three or four centuries; with all submission I would make it not more than a century or a century and a half. The style is so modern, that in the ever-changing dialects of the Malays, the style must be the criterion by which to judge of its antiquity, for there are no dates given in the book. It is evidently of Mahomedan concoction, in the mythical portions, and these have been mixed up with the historical traditions of the people, and written at a time at which Keddah had an opportunity of growing strong, when Burmah and Siam had other weighty matters in hand, such as intestine wars, or wars with neighbours.

1. The copy survives amongst Thomson's collection in New Zealand and is entitled *The History of Keddah* (102 pages).

2. i.e., Lieut.-Col. James Low mentioned in the chapter notes for Chapter XXIII. p. 117.

CHAPTER XXXI.

SUPERSTITIONS.

THE preceding chapter will give my readers a small glimpse into the mythological antecedents of my copper-coloured friends. I will now relate a few incidents which will give a peep into their present standard of mind.

One day I was lounging in my wicker chair, overcome by the great heat of the day. This was in the open verandah, where I was speaking to Oamut, Abraim, Doih, Hajee Abdulla, and others, who were seated tailor fashion on the matted floor. Oanchee arrived with a message which bespoke importance, for he gave a more than usual low tabbeh (bow), and sat himself down beside Abraim.

"Well, Oanchee," said I, "what is the news?"

"Oh," said he, "I find that new clearing at Permatang Rotan *baniak kras* (very hard)."

"How is that?"

"The *hantus* (evil spirits) are *baniak kras*."

"What do you mean?"

"Oh, Long Ketchil's wife has had a miscarriage."

“What have the *hantus* to do with that?”

“Oh, it was Long Ketchil that felled the big *marenti* tree, and the *hantus* got angry at him, and has taken to *usih* (vex) his wife, so none of the men will go near the clearing since the *hantus* have commenced to meddle with the woman.”

“Well, what is to be done?”

Here Abraim put in his advice to clear up matters. He said that his elder brother Oanchee had asked him to speak to me, as he knew I would not believe him, seeing that the white man does not believe in *iblis* (the devil) or in *hantus* (evil spirits), but that the Malay people were very *takoot* (frightened) at them, as they gave them sickness, fevers, and coughs, and all sorts of ailments. This was the case if they did not *pugi* (humour) them. They were very hard on the Malays, though they might not dare to meddle with great folks, like the white people.

“Well,” said I, “the work of clearing must go on, so what is to be done?”

“Well,” said Hajee Abdulla, “begging your pardon, sir, I am a holy man, and have made the pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina, and would not ask a favour for my brother Oanchee if it was not necessary. But we must have a *kinduri* (feast) before any more clearing can go on.”

“And what is the good of the *kinduri*?”

“Oh, it is to drive away the evil spirits.”

“Where are they?”

"Oh, they are in the stumps of the trees, and if we do not entice them out of the way, they don't like to live in the headless stumps, so will jump into the first man that comes near them. None of the Malays will go near the clearing."

"You are a hajee," said I to Abdulla, "and a true Mussulman; how is it you believe in hantus? why do you try to keep in favour with them and not with *Tuan Allah* (the Lord God)?"

"Oh," says the hajee, "that may be true; but we must not despise the customs of our ancestors, so the only way to keep clear of the *hantus* is to have a *kinduri*."

Here Doih struck in; he said that his wife was pregnant and was *gila* (mad) after *balachong*. She would eat neither rice curry nor anything else but *balachong*. He was sure the *hantus* had got into her, and was putting her up to vex him. The next thing would be that she would be *gila* for another husband, and then an *amok* (murder) might be the end of it. Here Oanchee, to back up Doih, said that Che Mat Taher has *kena latta* (been taken with latta, a strange nervous affection) since he was at the clearing. If you dance he dances; if you roar he roars; if you run he runs; if you throw anything down he would do the same; even if he had a basket of eggs on his head, down they would go and be smashed all to pieces. There was no resisting this appeal, so I asked what they wanted me about the *kinduri*, seeing I did

not believe in *hantus*. Oh, said they all, *Tuan* has got money, we have none. We want you to lend us two *ringits* (dollars) to buy fowls and sambals, and then we can have a *kinduri*, and get rid of the *hantus*.

Seeing this was the object of the meeting, and that there was no getting off, I paid the two dollars to Oanchee, who went away with the double object of feasting his friends and getting rid of the evil spirits.

When Oanchee had gone, Abraim remarked that Permatang Rotan was known of old to be very much infested with *hantus*: that the former settlers had fled from their attacks; and this time he had dreamt that they would be as bad if the place was not opened with proper ceremonies. "Dreamt," said I, "you do not believe in dreams do you?"

"Oh," said he, "whatever *I* dream is sure to come to pass. My dreams always come true, so I believe in them."

"Well, if you believe in dreams that you see come to pass, how is it you believe in spirits that you never saw?"

"Oh," said he, "I wish it were the case with every one: there is Chelong the opium smoker, he sees *hantus* every night, and has to be locked up in the *godown* (cellar) to keep them off. He shakes like a *daun neor* (cocoa-nut leaf) in the south-west monsoon, and runs as if they wanted to murder him."

With this glimpse into the mysteries of Malayan thought, I was anxious to see the *Kinduri*. Two days afterwards, being accounted a lucky day, it took place; but they avoided letting me see the rites, being ashamed of my unbelief, and their own superstition, which latter was contrary to their own professed religion (the Mahomedan.) I saw so far, that they constructed the model of a prow (boat) which being filled with rice and other eatables they carried off to a river and launched it—saying that they had induced the hantus to enter the boat, and as they could not travel over water they could not get back again. Thus was the forest cleared of evil spirits, and, after feasting on the good things prepared for the occasion, the Malays were ready to commence and fell the trees of which they formerly had so superstitious a dread.

In clearing the forest, fears are caused by the miasma set free from the vegetation. This circumstance no doubt has been the practical cause of the *Kinduri* and its puerile superstitions.

CHAPTER XXXII.

RAMASAMY PILLAY.

AMONGST the inhabitants of the Straits of Malacca the Klings form a considerable portion. They are more money-loving than the Malays, so they engage more in trade, or the occupations of agriculture and gardening. Altogether the Kling is a useful member of society, peaceful in his habits, usurious and wealth-creating.

On the estate on which I then resided, Ramasamy Pillay, a Hindoo Kling, exercised the office of native writer and accountant. He was tall and meagre in body, and of dark bronze complexion. He wore a muslin wrapper round his waist, and a muslin plaid over his shoulders. A red turban of moderate size adorned the upper man. When the turban was off he displayed a shaven head with a small tuft of hair sticking on the crown. He had four or five marks drawn with the ashes of cow-dung across his arms, and a yellow streak down his brow. These were his caste marks, and he was proud of them.

Ramasamy was attached to his young master, at least he frequently told him so; and were it not for the broad effrontery of his adulation and flattery, he would have had more credit for them than he obtained. It must be admitted that he was energetic, careful, and laborious. Before pay-day he would sit up all night summing up columns of dollars, cents, and doits, and he would count over the doits (value one-eighth part of a penny) with as much care and precision as the large pieces. He would also pay out many thousands of these without mistake. He would sit up next night to check his accounts, and not rest quiet till he had balanced them to a single doit. Such were Ramasamy's business habits.

His social habits were peculiar, and created much curiosity amongst the Malays. Abraim alleged that he peeped through the chinks of the walls of the store-room, when Ramasamy was at his dinner. Now Ramasamy's pride was that he was a holy man, and could not be seen eating. Further, Abraim alleged that Ramasamy ate his food like a cow, from off a plantain leaf laid on the floor. He used neither fingers, nor forks, nor even chop-sticks, but ducked down on all fours till his mouth reached the food. This may be true or not, for Ramasamy displayed great secrecy and mystery as to his times of meals.

He would say to me, "*Tuan*, I am very *soochi* (*chuchi*, or clean); I live entirely on vegetables; I

touch the flesh of no living animal ; I am of a high caste, next to the Brahmin : I cannot mix with Malays or other races, but I keep myself apart from all. My brother's wife cooks my food, and I go to her every night for my next day's meals."

Ramasamy was a widower, without children, so he was lonely in his condition, and his habits were ascetic. Ramasamy's brother's house was at Sungei Puyoh, a distance of five miles, and the way to it was through scrub infested with robbers and wild animals ; yet did this lonely Hindoo trudge over the distance morning and evening, after the labours of the day, and during the dark, guarded only by a long dirk, which he clutched in his right hand, ready for defence.

Ramasamy had been a court *vakeel* (law agent), and he was fond, as many of his countrymen are, of the excitement of the law courts. It was to him what pirating is to the Malays : every art was legitimate, from false swearing to bribery ; and it seems to have given an agreeable change to the generally quiet tenor of his life. The most improbable suits were concocted, the witnesses instructed, and the whole web of evidence rehearsed before the appearance at court ; so the chances were sufficiently doubtful to create suspense in hope or despair. A horse-race could not be more exciting to an Englishman than a disputed plea to Ramasamy.

Abraim had a female relative, the mistress of an European gentleman. Abraim was proud of this

"high connection," as it did not militate against his religious or moral creed, he being a Mahomedan. Now Abraim, while he laughed at Ramasamy's mysterious habits, which were the subject of much curiosity, had a great respect for his legal qualifications, and was desirous of enlisting them in a law plea that his female relative was engaged in. Ramasamy rejected the service with some disdain, with the remark that he was the agent for European and native gentlemen, but he would be sorry to serve a female of that description. I looked at Abraim; he was the picture of fury. He neither stamped nor foamed, but his eyes sparkled fire, and grasping his kris, he was about to bury it in the breast of the trembling Hindoo, when he was laid hold of by the bystanders, and led away.

I have mentioned that Ramasamy lived on vegetables solely. His temperament proved this. I recollect well, while going over some accounts with him, that I happened to touch his fingers. Oh, how cold, cold, that touch was!—how clammy, unfeeling, toad-like!—my hot young blood recoiled from the contact! Not long afterwards, I was sitting reading one evening in the corner of my verandah, when I heard a soft step approaching me. I looked up: it was Ramasamy, leaning against the wall, close by me. I saw at once that *something was up*; so I asked him what was the matter. He looked cautiously about him, and said, "Master is alone?"

"Yes," said I, "what of that?"

“ Master is lonely ?”

“ Well,” said I, “ what’s the matter ?”

“ Master must not be angry.”

“ Well,” said I, “ out with it.”

“ I have got a very handsome niece,—a beautiful girl of fifteen.”

“ You are fortunate, Ramasamy,” said I, half suspectingly.

“ I am a poor man ;—would master not like to *simpin satu buda?* (keep a youth.) She is yours to take.”

I was now fully enlightened on the object of his solitary errand.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

NATIVE CONNECTIONS.

I NEVER saw my intended. These things are managed in the Far East by the young ladies' guardians. Their desires are not consulted. As I am not writing my own history, I am not called upon to set forth my own feelings on the subject. Ramasamy's toad-like touch, a few days previously, may have done wonders to subdue any thoughts of so desirable a relationship. Or my young imagination *may* have portrayed the young lady to be an Indo-Malay, of handsome features and elegant form, as many of that class are. It is strange that the tastes of Europeans become modified by the climate; and what would repel them in their own land, does not do so in the tropics. The *putih kuning*, *panjang nipis* (olive complexion, and tall and slender form), so much extolled by Malayan poets, are attractive to the Europeans; and the *etam manis*, *eloh sangat* (nut-brown colour, most beautiful) of the popular Malayan songs, is even as attractive as the other,

to those who have long been habituated to the climate and the people.

Whatever way it may have been, it is not likely that I would have portrayed, in my fancy, Ramasamy's niece as a squat figure, flat-nosed, black and filthy. These fancies pertain not to the hot young folly, but cool old wisdom. It is now many years since that happened—yes, more than a quarter of a century ago. I am now a married man, and have my little ones growing up about me; and even now, after that long period gone by, I think that this was an important epoch in my life. To have formed the connection offered, would indeed have been obnoxious to the social and religious system in which I had been nurtured, in my native land; but it would have been quite in keeping with the manners and customs of East Indian society of that date.

So I may repeat, that, as I am not writing my own life, I need not state how far religious or moral reasons may have influenced me at that time; but I may say that, added to any feelings I may have had on these grounds, I had an unbounded love for *home*. I worked almost alone for one object; and that was to return to my country. At the time I am now writing about, I was yet in my teens; reflection, even then, kept desire within bounds. Notwithstanding that English mothers have the same prejudices as the mothers of Macedonia of old, I utterly abhorred the unfeeling conduct of many

of my countrymen in the East, viz., in the abandonment of their children by native mothers. Such conduct relieves the perpetrators from their entanglements, and so may not affect their worldly fortunes; but to abide by the course which honour, duty, and humanity dictate, has the effect of tying down all but the very wealthy, to the country for life.

Whatever my motives or feelings may have been in this affair, these need not prevent me from analyzing Ramasamy's. A black man's motives!—are they worthy of consideration? Yes, he had his motives and feelings nicely weighed, and well balanced; so let us try him.

He was a Hindoo,—so had no knowledge of the virtues of monogamy. These are best known to the natives of temperate climates. He would, no doubt, have liked to have had his niece married. I know he would; and to be the wife of a respectable man of his own class. But this object was not attainable. What then? Was he to marry her to a poor man of his own caste? This would make her a drudge and a slave for life. Worse than this; there was no security in marriage. She might have been thrown back on his hands, at the option of her husband. He resided in a country where his customs were not respected, nor his laws enforced. Could he marry her to a man of another caste? No!—this was repugnant to his laws, and theirs. Could he make her the concubine of a man of another caste? Yes. This was admitted by his

customs and laws; so he offered her to the white man. *Concubinage with the white man was infinitely preferable, in his opinion, to marriage with the poor Hindoo.* It was equally legal; nor did it involve, as in Europe, social degradation, to him or to her. He was astonished at my rejection of his offer; and the subject was never mentioned again.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE FIRST CHINESE WAR.

LORD AUCKLAND had taken fright at Russia, and attempted to forestall that nation's influence beyond the Punjaub, by occupying Afghanistan. The British army found itself entrapped, and was utterly exterminated. This dire event shook the Indian empire, from one end to the other. Every nerve had to be strained to repair the lost prestige of the Company's arms. The resources of the East India Company were severely tested; but, as in their other difficulties, a "happy-go-lucky" fortune maintained them. Meanwhile our difficulties with China came to a head. The Chinese officials fostered the opium trade, while at the same time their government prohibited it. Commissioner Lin, with true Oriental amiability, only beheaded one thousand of his countrymen daily. No doubt he was actuated by similar humane feelings when he destroyed one and a quarter millions' worth of British property, for the sake of the health of his loving countrymen. Be that as it may, let historians decide. McCulloch's ill-natured

suggestion, that the motives of the Chinese government actually lay in the desire to restrain the export of the precious metals required to buy the opium, is not worthy of notice. So we will pass from these minor themes of Great Britain and China, to the major theme of Pulo Pinang.

If the events of the Affghanistan war vibrated across the little island, the China war shook it to its core. The Chinese population tied up their tails with ineffable contempt; and they at the same time laughed in their long sleeves. "What!" said they, "the English are numbered by tens; the Chinese are numbered by millions! Preposterous! The great Emperor will sweep them from off the face of the earth!" I recollect well, standing on the granite walls at Tanjong Tokong, with my China friend, Chan Guan, when he suddenly espied the little "Diana," a Company's steamer of 160 tons burden and 40 horse-power, rounding Pulo Teecoose.¹ The "Diana" was the first steamer constructed in East India. She attained the great speed (at that time) of five knots an hour, and was commanded by the redoubtable Congalton.² Her fame was great, as she had lately encountered a formidable fleet of pirates, and *smashed* them,—but more of this by-and-bye.

"There," said I, "Chan Guan, that is what will do it!"

"*Ah ya*," said he, with incredulity, "we have *wonkangs* (junks) ten times larger than that; and

we can put great wheels to them, moved by a thousand men, which will run over that little thing like an alligator over a mud-fish!"

"Chan Guan," said I, "you are ignorant: that little vessel is moved by a *likmat* (contrivance) you know nothing about; it is moved by the most powerful of agents, *asap ayer* (steam), which far transcends the power of mankind."

This Chan Guan met by incredulous indifference; he was not to be persuaded. Said he, "Let your fleets anchor in the river of Canton; we have divers that can live below the water for three days; the Emperor will send them to *korch lobang* (make holes) in your ships' bottoms, and sink them. It is sheer infatuation of you English to think of making war with the Central nation. I will admit that you English are clever at fighting; but our numbers will smother you. If you kill 10,000, the Emperor will send other 10,000. He has no end of men!"

Chan Guan forgot that these men had legs, and that by these means they would run away from the English.

Not long after this, a low, black craft made her appearance. This was the "Nemesis" steamer, commanded by Mr. Hall, a Berwick man, now well known to fame. Hall's masters were great, so could afford to be generous. Congalton's (a North Berwick man), were small-hearted and jealous; so they were niggard to a zealous servant.

The commander of the "Nemesis" was proud of

his achievement in having brought out his craft round the Cape of Good Hope,—and well he might be; nor was he lax in displaying her powers. He invited the European society of Penang on board, for a trial trip. As a humble iota of that society, I was there, and, with others, felt convinced that the “Nemesis” had got a man that could well handle her. He run her close along the north beach; turned her in all directions, shooting through the junks and native craft, and, at last, backing her stern on to the sandy beach, he landed us over the taffrail. This was a mimic rehearsal of future great actions.

The next phenomenon that appeared at Penang was a full European regiment (the Cameronians). These remained a few days, full of life, energy, and hope. Alas! we followed with our inquiries the fortunes of the friends we then made. How melancholy their fate! England’s gallant men sank from disease in the stagnant marshes of Chusan. Fleet after fleet, and troop after troop, followed. But why should we count these? *England’s cradle rocks that the infant may live, grow big, go abroad—and die, wrestling for wealth or glory on a foreign strand!*

And what was Penang doing? She was not sentimentalizing; she was speculating. Her citizens were utilitarians. An order came down from Bengal for the chief civil authority to buy up all the grass that he could lay his hands on. He had the finest grass-park in the island himself; so he declared grass to be four times its previous value, and

with the other park-owners, "made hay while the sun shone." His salary was small—only 2400*l.* per annum,—so windfalls like this were not to be despised. Another order came down to buy up all the cattle. These also were declared four times their previous value; and the merchants and planters of Penang ransacked the Malay peninsula, its padangs and prairies, for the cow and the buffalo. The result was that an immense herd of lean, fleshless specimens of the bovine race were shut up to starve in the government lawn at the *Tanjong* (Point). The chief civil authority was all smiles; he expatiated on his smartness in having collected such a mob of bones, averaging, with calves included, 10*l.* a head. Little did he think that there was a spy in the camp, and that Sir Herbert Maddock intended to pay Penang a visit. The times of Warren Hastings were not yet run out.

1. Pulo Teecouse, now spelt Pulau Tikus (Rat Island) is an island off the north coast of Penang.

2. For a fuller account of the exploits of Captain Samuel Congalton, see Chapter XXXIX.

CHAPTER XXXV.

SIR GEORGE BONHAM.

MR. BONHAM was a good specimen of a Company's Governor. Young, liberal, and affable, he was exceedingly popular amongst the Europeans, whom he entertained frequently. His plum-puddings were good, so was his champagne, and as these found their way to the stomach, so were the hearts of his friends taken captive. With a considerable knowledge of mankind, he united a shrewdness in arranging his policy. His efforts were exerted to keep things in easy train, and, like a sensible man, make them pleasant if he could. Mr. Bonham had been a quarter of a century in the Far East, and had drawn to himself many friends and supporters. He had a great deal of "bonhommie" about him. He was honest, upright, just, and generous—as a great man ought to be. It is a pity that such men should be dangerous to the liberty of the subject; for the latter part of Mr. Bonham's rule had a tendency that way.

As the Supreme Court of India has always been a bore to the government of India, so was the Court of Judicature of the Straits to the Straits government. Though the governor *ex-officio* was president of that Court, and the resident councillors were co-adjutors of the Recorder, the acts of the Government were sometimes questioned by the lawyers, and especially in the case of native pleas; this interference was neither palatable nor respectful to a despotic government. At best the presence of a recorder was a troublesome affair to the civil authorities. The Recorder, being an English lawyer, trained to English law, and imbued with what Indian officials would call its subtleties, he was thought by them to be intractable in cases where governmental policy was considered by him to run counter to law and justice. To have the Government policy thwarted by an English Court, especially in the cases of native Indians, was felt to be humiliating to the government of the Honourable East India Company and their servants. Indeed it was offensive to them. So the Court of Judicature must be got rid of, to make things more pleasant to the ruling class, and Sir William Norris, the then recorder, a man of small calibre, was easily worked upon. He was lazy, and it might save him trouble. The first step of the programme was unfolded to him by Mr. Bonham—that was to admit no more lawyers to the bar. This chimed in well with Sir William's private feelings, and he supported the motion, so it was

decreed that Her Majesty's Court of Judicature was henceforth to be without a bar, and that Her Majesty's subjects *were not to have the advantage of counsel!*

Now Sir William Norris took ill, for want of employment, and asked leave for a few months' absence. This was readily granted, as it gave an opportunity to unfold Mr. Bonham's next measure, viz., the abolition of the Recorder himself. For Mr. Bonham not unreasonably argued when we have got rid of the lawyers, what good can there be for a Recorder? So to make this consummation patent to his supporters and admirers, he held a Court himself, which he constituted on the most simple principles of common sense and equity. Queen's law was voted a bore, so it was to be abolished. Having empannelled grand juries and petty juries, Mr. Bonham despatched the criminal sessions in one fourth of the time that the Recorder ever had done. This was highly gratifying to the jurors, as it detained them so short a time. Thus Mr. Bonham was voted four times more clever than the Recorder, and they hung a Malay that session to prove the assertion.

So far, things went on swimmingly; fortunately no Europeans were hung, or the case might have been different. Sir William Norris meanwhile returned to his duties, and so saved *any mischief* from actually taking place. About this time a young lawyer made his appearance from the capital of

India, and sought admission to practise at the bar. This was refused. The refusal was peremptory, and not to be questioned. Our young lawyer, true to the instincts of his profession, questioned the dictum and persevered.

During the five months of Mr. Bonham's judgeship, great causes had been smouldering, and had now burst forth. The serree farmer felt himself aggrieved by the East India Company's officials, and went to Court. The serree farmer was a Kling, so loved *law*, we will not say *justice*. He had not the pleasure of counsel, and, while the Court without lawyers clung to a common sense verdict, the Kling clung to *law* as his right, and would not be satisfied. Case upon case, and complaint over complaint, crowded into the young lawyer's chambers; but he was powerless: he dare not approach the seat of English justice, appointed by Her Majesty's ministers. What was to be done? He hit upon another plan, he laid the serree farmer's case before the tribunal of public opinion. He wrote in the papers. Here the cause was argued to the full vindication of the serree farmer. The Recorder sat aghast as he read the morning's luminary. Mr. Bonham foamed, and the old Registrar shook his goose-quill. He volunteered to be the champion of the Court, promising to blow the *chaff* back to Calcutta. A furious onslaught was made on the rejected advocate. He was surely squashed? No! column after column of the *Penang Gazette*, and page after page, bore witness

to his pertinacity, if not to his rights. The old Registrar was palled by the volubility of the admirable Crichton, yet he was foolhardy, and fought a sinking cause with desperation. This did not avail; for the young lawyer clearly beat the pugnacious old Registrar off the field, and showed, to a laughing community, in not over reverend sentences, how the old man was like a child playing at draughts, his right hand playing against his left.

In the arena of public opinion, the battle of the *law* against what is sometimes called *common sense*, was gained. The whole island took up the young lawyer's cause; and a monster petition was presented in full Court for his admission. This Mr. Bonham shirked, to the last; but his *common sense* came to his aid, and he gave in. With an ill grace, he allowed the *law* to have its course again. The young lawyer was admitted only as a *special favour*, and he was to be the *very last*; but as the *dramatis personæ* shift frequently in India that *very last* was only applicable during Sir William's short tenure of office. It came to pass that the bar was in due time recognized in the manner it ought to be. *It is the great defender of the rights and liberties of the people; say to the contrary who may.*

Mr. Bonham as an upright man, judged according to his lights, forgetting how power might have been abused by an incompetent, or dishonest successor. As a good Company's servant, he was desirous to relieve his Government from the heavy burden in the

cost of maintaining an imperial Court of Judicature, in which he saw no use, when such men as himself and Thomas Church¹ were there to perform the offices of judges of the people. Mr. Bonham retired from the charge of the Straits government, respected and beloved by all who were so fortunate as to have access to him. With him was not found any of the repulsive hauteur of the Bengal civilian. He had sufficient pomposity to tell of his high position. His fine grey hair gave dignity to an otherwise not very aristocratic physiognomy. He had a snub nose, a stutter, and a lisp. Yet his upright carriage, and amiable jocularities, sank these, and displayed his gentlemanly qualities, amongst which a high sense of honour was not the least conspicuous.

He held broader views of the responsibilities of government than most of his compeers. His masters, in sinking trade, had taken on themselves *the burden of higher aspirations*. The extreme tenacity of patronage, which was a monopoly stringently enforced, he cast aside, as far as he dared. He still admitted his *free countrymen* to respectable offices in the public service, and seeing this, several gentlemen of good birth and education resident in the Straits were induced to serve the Company's Government. With the retirement of Mr. Bonham, an alteration of policy took place towards these gentlemen. A policy which, while it did gross injustice to the parties concerned, who had given up other prospects

for those then offered by Governor Bonham, at the same time involved the abnegation of all local merit.

Mr. Bonham was afterwards created a baronet for services in China.

1. Thomas Church was appointed Resident Councillor in Singapore in 1837, an office which he carried out most ably until his retirement in 1856.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE NONIA OR NONA.

THE Nonia of Keddah, or the Nona of Malacca, means lady. But with Europeans, or with natives conversing with Europeans, the term signifies *native mistress*. The white wife of a European is termed *min*, a corruption of ma'am or madam; had he a coloured wife, she would be termed *bini*; and had he a coloured mistress, she would be called *nona*, or *nonia*. The concubine of a Chinese or Malay would be termed *gundih*. The lower order of Malays talk of their better half as their *perampuan*, or woman, as do the lower classes of the English. The origin of the term is the same in each language, and it is plainer and more practical than first thought indicates.

Before the advent of English ladies, the nona held a conspicuous part in the social economy of Penang. Their influence ramified the whole fabric. So great was it, at one time, that governmental interference was thought necessary. One of the early

governors of the settlement, in a rather lachrymose despatch to the Supreme Government, bewailed the fact that the nonas of Europeans were monopolizing all the best building sites on the northern beach—a state of matters tending to disconcert the equanimity of their white rivals, on appearing in the arena.

The nona may be Chinese, Malay, Javanese, or Balinese; so long as she is yellow, or copper coloured, she does for a nona. She may be Mahomedan, Hindoo, or Buddhist; so long as she is not asked to marry, she need not be a Christian. On rare occasions, she may be asked to legalize her connection with the white man. In this case she duly becomes a good Christian, and attends church, sitting some five or six seats behind her white lord and master.

The nona is clothed in rich silk sarongs, and flowing white *cabayoos*. She waddles in wooden clogs, held to her feet by a wooden peg, which sticks up between her great and second toes. Her rich black hair is thrown back, and knotted behind, where it is secured by round-headed gold pins. She has no other head-dress than that which nature has given her. This would be envied by a western belle, and her dark sparkling eye illuminates a countenance that tells of passion more than of intelligence. Her gait I have termed a "*waddle*;" this is partly owing to oriental ideas of gracefulness, but more owing to the weakness of muscle and flexibility of joints. Her arms swing as she pro-

ceeds, owing to the same causes. Thus her carriage is not prepossessing. Her features are small; nor do they bear the impress of thought or mind so striking to the oriental when he first views the western lady. When seated on mats, or supported by the luxurious cushion—that is the time at which the nona appears to most advantage; for the softness of manner, so congenial to those who suffer from the languor caused by the climate, proves too frequently seductive. The Mongolian features are by no means tasteful to the European,—small, square, and flat—but these characteristics are much subdued in the women; and, in some instances, are not apparent in any great degree. Where the coal-black eye is large, and the face oval—and I have often seen such—the nona is a beautiful specimen of the gentler sex; so it is not to be wondered at that the friendless, lonely, yet wealthy European should sacrifice at her shrine.

The nonas had their circles, their visitings, their scandal, and their gossip. They might not indulge in tea parties; but they had their pic-nics, and serree, and betel conversations. Their European lords and masters were few, so they were held in so much the greater estimation. The habits of each were critically canvassed. The faithless had their due amount of censure, for the nona, as a whole, was faithful to her partner, whether for the time being, or for life.

When I say “for the time being,” I must explain

that the stay of many Europeans in the settlement was short ; so in this case the engagement was temporary. On their departure the nona was either handed over to a friend and successor, or she had to cast her nets again. The children of such connections had most varied fortune. Some were owned, educated, and reared in the lap of luxury ; others were left to their fate. In the case of female children thus left or abandoned, the fate was sorrowful indeed. The mother or nona, according to her instincts, reared her female children for the money she might make by them, and the best fate was that they might be the purchase of a wealthy man, else a hideous career was in prospect. When I say "purchase," I must explain that the virgin child on being given away, brought a *douceur* to the mother of 10*l.* or 20*l.* sterling. Such was the moral code, a quarter of a century ago. It may be somewhat modified now ; *but it is inherent in the social system in the tropics*, so I fear never can be totally eradicated. The more abundant presence of European ladies, no doubt, has so far had an influence for the better, but as affecting Europeans only. On the first arrival of a European, he was either introduced to the native female circle by a friend, or the native female circle would obtain access to him by means adopted by themselves. A life of chastity and continence was a phenomenon so rare as to be beyond native belief ; and the best illustration of these facts will be to recount the experience of a young gentleman, whom

knew intimately as a friend, but who shall be nameless.

The young gentleman was well connected, and was possessed of an ample income. His age was eventeen. At this time he was sent, like many other young men, to manage a plantation away from all neighbours. He lived in a bungalow contiguous to a Malay village, and seldom met his countrymen. Such being the case, the nona conclave concluded that he was a good match, and that it was improper for him to live a life of solitude and depression. The queen of the nonas, an old lady of sixty, was consulted. She was a person of great experience, having had intimate converse with one of the former governors, and several of the original leading merchants. So it was decreed that it was unbecoming of the simple young gentleman to despise her and her society. But how was so shy a young man to be approached? This delicate affair was left to the old queen.

One day as the young gentleman was eating his tiffin (lunch), his servant brought in a bottle, which he said an old lady wished him to accept of. Now to his innocent ideas, there was nothing wrong in accepting a bottle from an old lady. The bottle on inspection was seen to be full of sugared *bilimbings* (an acid fruit). It was really very kind of the old lady to think of him; so the present was accepted with many thanks. Next day, while partaking of the fruit at lunch, an old lady was announced as

being desirous of an interview. "By all means, her present is very palatable, ask her to step in." So in steps a respectable looking old Malay lady, who curtsies to show her acquaintance with European manners. She is soon seated, and addresses the young gentleman first as *tuan* (master), and as the damp wears off, as *anak* (son). At last she invites him to come and see her, as she has a play with her family in one of the houses of the village. She departs, and sure enough on the young gentleman looking out of his portico, he sees thirty or forty young native damsels sporting about the house indicated.

Home associations had yet strong power over him, and he instinctively sees the impropriety of the acquaintanceship, and avoids further intercourse. The old lady calls again, and is repulsed. Petrified and confounded, perhaps not a little enraged at seeing her amiable plot cast to the winds, she departs with her young charges; but she leaves one of the most experienced, and fortunately for my friend's independence, one of the plainest, to remain in the nearest house and watch and *kill* if possible.

The young lady left was a Malayo-Chinese girl. There she sat from hour to hour, and from day to day, watching every movement of the young man. If he went to bathe, she would peep through the trees to spy him. If he sat in his verandah, she sat opposite in her *serambi*, hoping to catch one sign of weakness or the most minute token of soft desire. Her pertinacity was astonishing; for from

month to month, and even for years, this was her sole object. But it was of no avail. All things must have an end; and so had this enterprise of the Malayo-Chinese girl also a conclusion, by the removal of the mysteriously unfeeling young man to another and distant settlement.

One would have thought that hope would have been blighted within her yearning breast. No—love burns not to be quenched. So remarkable had been her determination that she bore his name, and was known by it; but of what avail? After a while she followed him, and by bribing his native servants, gained access to his porch. Here she stood waiting, with some papers in her hands, till the hour of his appointments would bring him out. Punctual to his time he descends. She rushes forward and places the papers in his hands. What were they? Mere waste paper—an excuse for the encounter. He quivers like an aspen leaf, but stern resolve overcomes, and the poor creature sees him no more.

Such are the episodes in human life. Amidst sunshine there are many cutting cruel blasts. The children of passion know not, nor understand not, the energy that binds the son of the cold north to his destiny. Each weighs the other by their own standards, so their actions are inexplicable. By our standard their actions are lewd, immoral, and wicked. By their standard our actions are cold, prudish, and unfeeling.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

RETURN TO SINGAPORE.

THE many associations which connected me with Penang were at length to be left behind. A sojourn of upwards of three years had been full of novelty. I was now entering manhood, and, with it, stepped into another sphere of action. The natives no longer prattled their little complaints and troubles, and I no longer found myself unconsciously sympathising deeply with their humble life-dreams and anxieties. Perhaps, too, my new avocations led me to less intimate converse with the natives, and more into the emporium of strangers. There was more of distrust, and less of confidence in the white man.

Singapore, at that time, was a town of 30,000 inhabitants. These consisted of nearly every nation of the earth; at least one or two of every civilized nation were to be found there, but the Chinese and Malays predominated. The European part of the town was studded with handsome mansions and villas of the merchants and officials. The

Chinese part of the town was more compactly built upon, and resounded with busy traffic. The Malays lived in villages in the suburbs, and their houses were constructed of wood and thatched with leaves. In the Chinese and Malay quarters, fires frequently broke out, spreading devastation into hundreds of families.

The roadstead was covered with European, Chinese, and Malayan vessels, in which the constant hum of commerce rang, and the question naturally arises, how was this conglomeration of divers tongues, creeds, and nations held together? I will try and sketch the internal economy of the settlement.

The Europeans, who were the dominant race, did not number many. Those on shore might be two hundred in number, those in the shipping would number not more than four to five hundred. Occasionally the presence of one of Her Majesty's frigates might double that number. The Europeans were principally following mercantile pursuits, and, as a body, they were upright, honourable, and stable. Their word, in those days, was as good as their bond, and the consequence was—*confidence*. No banks had yet appeared, so each firm kept its own iron safe. The Europeans were, at that time, social and hospitable. At the hour of 6 p.m. a general rendezvous was held at Scandal Point, where the news was rattled over, and affairs of interest discussed. The various married couples

would pass and repass the assembled group in their conveyances, and at times they would stop to speak to acquaintances. All were known to each other, and, on the whole, society kept on good terms. The more general advent of European ladies gave a better tone to the morals of the community than in other parts of the Far East. Notwithstanding this, much of the old leaven remained with some of the original settlers, merchants, and officials. Thus gambling and other "fashionable vices" were indulged in even amongst the highest circles.

But how was it with the other tribes of the community? Gambling was almost the only pastime of the Chinese, and cockfighting of the Malays. True these were forbidden, but only by law, not by practice. The consequence was that murders, arsons, thieving, pirating, and heinous crimes were rampant amongst the natives. Gang robberies were so common as to be of nightly occurrence, and each neighbour, as he lay down to rest, wondered if his house was to be attempted that night. The European houses were only on rare occasions attacked. This security was owing to the number of servants retained on the premises. But the poorer Eurasians, Chinese, and Klings suffered greatly. The robbers were principally Chinese, belonging to a secret society called *Tan Tue Hoey*—a society feared by all Governments having Chinese as a portion of their population.

The Company's Government, being based on

Asiatic principles rather than European, lent great facilities to this disordered state of matters. The revenue was absorbed in paying exorbitant salaries to the higher officials, which left nothing to pay the working ones. Thus, while the governor received 5000*l.* sterling per annum, the real head of the police had a salary of only 60*l.* sterling per annum. What could be expected? The chief of the police kept pace with the governor in accumulating an independence. And how was this? Gambling, to which the Chinese were inordinately addicted, was forbidden by law, but, by the amiable and lax condescension of the governor, it was allowed to be carried on universally over the settlement for a period of fifteen days at the time of the Chinese new year. The object of this laxity was always a myth to me. At this period every opium shop had its gambling apparatus exposed to view, and all tribes, Europeans included, dived into the saturnalia. The town resounded with merriment and strife, alternately. The nights were consumed in debauchery, the days in sleep. The vice of gambling was openly encouraged by the opium farmer, and winked at by the Government, as tending to increase the returns of the revenue. This fifteen days of excitement redoubled the zest for the forbidden vice. But, though forbidden, did it cease? No! Some of the leading officials drew great rents from these gambling houses. The vice was covertly allowed by the police. Not that the chief of the

police would take bribes, no, his Presbyterian prejudices would not admit of that, but his wife being of another persuasion, took them for him; and, curiously enough, such shops as had forgot the monthly fee to the lady, were sure to be set upon, and their owners hauled by the tail before the magistrate, who would fine and imprison them without suspecting the "wheels within wheels."

I have stated that murders were the consequence of the general laxity of the Government; and, in doing so, I give the results of my own observations. I had not been two days in Singapore, before I came across the dead body of a Kling, lying across the public road, within half a mile of the town, with his throat cut from ear to ear. I had not been there six months, before I fell across five human beings weltering in their blood, lying also on the public road, two miles out of town; and, in four years, I counted twenty bodies of murdered men on the public roads, all within a few miles of the town. And, if so, what may have happened far off from these roads? These facts may aid a suggestion which will be horrible enough. An instance, in particular, made my hair stand on end. It was before dawn that I was riding through a gloomy forest which then shaded one of the northern roads, when suddenly my horse started at the yet warm and mutilated body of a Chinaman, lying across the road. The marks of the death struggle were yet fresh. I was shocked and horrified at the sight,

and being unarmed, turned my horse's head to the open country with all possible speed.

To give the reader an idea of what Singapore was twenty years prior to my own time, I will make a few extracts from the autobiography of Abdulla Moonshee :²

"Soon after Mr. Crawford (the famous historian), became resident at Singapore, news spread abroad that the Chinese of the Tan Tae Hoey, whose haunts were in the interior of the island, intended to attack the town, for these people were very numerous, there were thousands of them."

Abdulla continues to say that he visited their haunts in disguise. He characteristically tells how he disguises himself as a Malay beggar, carrying with him only "a rupee's worth of pice, a small knife, a pencil, and a piece of paper." I will not take a copy of his adventures here, so after he returned safely from his expedition, he goes on to narrate what happened in town. It was to this effect, "that about two hundred Chinese had come down to Campong Glam,³ armed, with their faces blackened, their march lighted by torches. They robbed the house of the Roman Catholic priest (the poor old, amiable, Padre Mia). The priest had no one in his house but his cook, so the robbers bound him hand and foot, and gutted the house of all his valuables. Efforts were made to recover the property, and one Chinaman with a blackened face was caught. He was brought to the lock-up; but, on the following

night, two or three hundred of his armed comrades came into town, and breaking the prison doors, released him. The European constable escaped by the windows, and the native ones all ran away, to save their lives."

The next affair mentioned by Abdulla is the ransacking of the Doby Ghaut by two or three hundred Chinese. The policemen ran off, leaving the dobies (washermen) to the mercy of the robbers. The robbers tied the householders to the posts, and carried off all they could lay their hands upon. The neighbours dare not open their doors to see what the noise was about, for, on one door being opened, the owner's two fingers were immediately chopped off. When the robbers had made off, *then assistance came*, but only to find boxes opened, and property scattered about in the greatest confusion. The householders were released, and the people commenced quarrelling. "At length the police came, and pretended to search and investigate; but God knows they were all so terrified that they wished themselves unborn."

In this way matters remained. Sometimes every night, sometimes every other night, robberies were committed, till a consummation arrived, by the cannon in the battery, sentry, musket and all, disappearing, never more to be heard of. A Siamese junk was attacked in the harbour, and all the crew killed, except four, who saved themselves by jumping overboard. On the police visiting the junk, six

or seven of the crew were found to be dead, covered with wounds, and the deck was daubed over with blood.

To these narratives, of which the above are short abstracts, Abdulla adds: "I shall not enlarge further on the conduct of the Chinese *Tan Tae Hoey*. In Singapore they were exceedingly licentious, and did as they pleased, without regard to decency or civilized manners. How many lives of the servants of God, how much property, did they unjustly take! There were hundreds of houses robbed which I have not noticed, indeed I have only given a very slight idea of what they did. *Nevertheless the great men who governed the country remained quiet, satisfied with their evening drives, their well-covered tables, their well-lighted houses, and their salaries of thousands of dollars every month. They allowed the Chinese to tyrannize over an English country; in this way the Company's (E. I.) property was wasted in paying salaries only.*"*

The sentences in italics are remarkable as indicating the opinions of an intelligent native gentleman who wrote thirty years ago of occurrences prior to that period. They were opinions that *wise men would have done well to weigh*; but I fear if they attracted notice it was only to excite a smile of contempt.

It was not till the year 1843 that the East India

* The above I have extracted from a portion translated by Broddell, Jour. E. I. Arch.

Company's Government were forced to a measure calculated to promote the public safety. No doubt the measure had great opposition from the monopolizing bureaucracy which governed India. This measure was to place a responsible officer at the head of the police. But the choice of a man? there's the rub. The office was a very responsible one, involved hard work and active attention by night and by day. It was beneath the regard of a civilian of the *privileged class*, and the next to that, a Company's military officer competent for the office could not be found. The office required thorough acquaintance with the native languages, and of the manners and usages of the inhabitants. So this distasteful alternative had to be taken, viz., to appoint a *free English gentleman** to the office. Free Englishmen entering the East India Company's service were saddled with the lugubrious designation of *uncovenanted*. This to the religious British ear will sound as something like the *unregenerated*. It had certainly nothing to do with the "solemn league and *covenant*," against which Claverhouse made such fierce warfare. But reserving this subject for future elucidation, I will proceed to say that a gentleman of high principle and honour

* This term requires explanation. A free-trader in India was an English ship of London or Liverpool, not belonging to the East India Company, nor in their service. A free merchant was one who traded on his own account; and a free Englishman was a private person, not *under bond* for service to the Government, such as planters, merchants, barristers, stow-keepers, &c., &c.

accepted the charge of the Singapore police. He was a gentleman who moved in the highest circles of the place. Being *uncovenanted*, this gentleman was nominated deputy superintendent of police, the object of the prefix being to guard against the precedent of an *interloper* being created full superintendent, which might have the effect, in a minute degree, of interfering with the regular service. Such were the narrow sectarian barriers which the East India Company set up against the employment of educated Englishmen residing within the limits of their charter.

Now highly qualified as this gentleman was, he was paid one quarter of the salary that would have been offered to the lowest official of India House nomination, and one half of what would have been offered to a military cadet. Nevertheless he soon put the police into such a state of discipline that the bye-lanes and forests became more safe than the streets of the town were under the former *régime*. Gambling was put down with a strong hand, piracy abated, and gang robbery was utterly eradicated. Such were the services of Thomas Duncan, Esquire,⁴ a man of great delicacy of feeling, benevolent disposition, high social powers, being a fine singer, a jolly companion, and a universal favourite.

1. Scandal Point was a knoll on the old seafront by the Padang.

2. Abdullah, Thomson's teacher of Malay, gave him a copy of his autobiography to translate in 1846. This Thomson did in 1874. Abdullah's copy survives in Thomson's New Zealand collection.

3. i.e. in the Sultan Arab Street area of Singapore.

4. i.e., Thomas Dunman, Suptd. of Police Singapore, 1843-71.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

TERUMBO MYET.

Terumbo signifies coral reef, and *myet* a corpse. The name is not a pleasant one, for one of the chief dangers in the Straits of Singapore. Notwithstanding this it bears happy memories to me. It was while lying off this reef that I first obtained the friendship of the late Captain Samuel Congalton of the Honourable Company's steamer "Diana." His friendship lagged not during his life. He was sent out by the Government to place a beacon on this shoal, so we lay there at anchor for about three weeks. And how was the time spent? Let us linger over the recollection of these happy hours.

The weather was delightful; the sea as smooth as glass, the air never disagreeably hot; so, with the jolly company of the captain, how could we but enjoy ourselves? We anchored close to the lee of the shoal,—and let us look around. To the westward, the Carimons reared their blue woody peaks; to the north, the low shore of the Malay peninsula could be descried, the bushy heads of the jungle at

times just peeping above the horizon. Beyond that, Gunong Poolai¹ reared its long back. To the east and south, countless islands studded the view;—here, sandy, glittering in the sun; there, grassy; yonder, rocky. Some covered with dense jungle; others adorned with pine apple and chumpada gardens. These gardens were yet unexplored. The mysteries of their mazes were attractive to my young spirit. Would the captain gratify my curiosity? Oh, yes. Here was the jolly-boat, and a crew of seven Malays to go where I liked. What could have been more liberal and enjoyable than this?

At early dawn next morning, the unmistakable odour of the coral reef was apparent. We are all astir. Taking a hurried taste of hot coffee and biscuits, we then pulled off to the reef. It was found to be an oval patch; and the beacon was to be built at the east end. This I will leave to the gallant captain; it being a monument of his skill. I myself proceed over the reef, with my usual useless idleness, and view the wonders thereof. Here I fell across the gigantic cockle, which old Dampier correctly says would dine two hundred men. At times these cockles measure four feet in length; but those we found here did not exceed fourteen to sixteen inches. Here again I stumbled over the black slug, called *butu kling* by the Malays,—a characteristic term, but not translatable into English. Again, I spy the *babi laut*, a black ball, bristling with needles, which it is almost death to touch. I keep clear of

them, while I admire their tender structure. The slightest touch breaks the venomous spears to pieces. I walk over corals of all descriptions, forms, and sizes, enough to fill twenty museums. We get into the boat, and row round the reef. Here, in the clear pellucid water, we espy the most delicate branchy corals I have ever seen, and thousands of fishes sporting amongst the marine grottos. And how beautiful the colours of these fishes! They rival the birds of the adjacent coasts in brightness and variety. Green, blue, yellow, and purple. The scene is enchanting.

But the tide rises, and eight bells are struck—a sound that gladdens the heart when the appetite is good; and we return on board. The captain is proud of his morning's success. He saves his honourable masters, the East India Company, three thousand dollars, which was the tender of a contractor for the beacon. We dress, and are soon seated at his hospitable table, covered with well-prepared Oriental dishes. The curried fowl is splendid; the red-fish and *romynia* pickles delightful. Our captain teases his pet ape, and his tame otter; and he jokes and *spins yarns* about all parts of the world. After breakfast, the jolly-boat is at my service; it is well laid in with provisions and water, and I pull to the labyrinths of Pulo Pecee,² in search of novelty. Noon finds us anchored under a shady mangrove. We had landed at a village; and having bought abundance of sugar-cane, plantains, and

pine apples, the Lascars enjoy a feast to their heart's content. Evening warns us to return; and we get alongside after dusk, well satisfied with our pull amongst the narrow intricacies of the wooded islands, and our sail amidst the gentle zephyrs which now prevail in the Straits. At eight bells, spirits, water, and sherry are placed on the table, which, having been discussed, we retire to an early rest, after the constant exercise of the day. The above is a specimen of the daily routine, which was varied by excursions in different directions, such as to Pulo Salook,³ for a shot at the wild pigeons, or to a passing *free trader*, to obtain news from home or India. Few can imagine the soft soothing enjoyableness of such waters who have never seen them.

Sunday being a day of rest, all the Lascars would be dressed out in their best suits, and the deck would be as clean as a new pin. No more than a short visit to the beacon was indulged in. It had now reared its head considerably above the waters. The captain was a Presbyterian of very liberal range; yet, belonging to the Established Church of Scotland, he had not forgotten his old prejudices against the Seceders, towards whom he let off what little spleen was in his nature. His contests with Bishop Wilson,⁴ of Calcutta, had been frequent, while that high episcopal dignitary was travelling as his passenger over his diocese. The Bishop's idiosyncrasies, which brought gravity and gaiety, sacredness and profanity, solemnity and mirth, into

too close and jarring proximity, had much of Congalton's good-natured criticism directed to them; and many were the laughs his friends had at his descriptions of the peculiarities of the earnest, simple-minded, good Bishop. One day, an excellent *devilled* fowl was placed on the table. His Lordship was asked what he would take. Looking around at the various dishes, he at length asked the captain for a piece of his *enemy*;—a bit of clerical wit that Congalton's quick and humorous perception enjoyed intensely.

The Bishop had morning-prayers on the quarter-deck of the steamer, when he made all joining in them kneel on the bare deck, against the skylights. This pulled rather stoutly against Congalton's strict Presbyterian reminiscences. It would have also been a very strange sight for his Malay crew, to see their captain in such a position; so on such occasions he always got out of the way; on the plea of shoals ahead, or compasses out of order. The good Bishop was annoyed at this, and would argue. Congalton would half excuse himself, half palliate. He would do anything rather than be rude; at the same time, anything to avoid going down on his marrow-bones before his native crew. He would tell the Bishop that Presbyterians prayed standing. They could come to no satisfactory understanding. The Bishop was nettled, at times; the captain was obdurate. At length the Bishop, to clear up all scores, said, "See, Captain; look at that brass wheel

of yours ; one spoke is my religion, the next one is yours ; don't they both go into the same nave?— So let us be friends." Congalton was a man who could appreciate such an amiable proposition. "The Bishop was a *brick* at bottom," said he ; "he is made of the right stuff!"

Congalton was famous for his dinners, and the most admired of his dainties were his soups. The ladies always praised them, and asked how they were made. Congalton was innocent of the art, but he always had an answer which excited the risible faculties of his friends.

"Why madam," Congalton would say ; "there is nothing like an old tough cock for making soup ; and I always keep several for this purpose."

"Indeed, Captain!" was the exclamation of his fair inquirers. His naïve wit and bluff tenderness made him a great favourite with the ladies.

He, however, died a bachelor, poor fellow !

1. Now spelt Pulau.

2. Now P. Pesek, west of Singapore.

3. Now P. Sulu near the Raffles Lighthouse.

4. Daniel Wilson was Anglican Bishop of Calcutta between 1832 and 1858.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

CAPTAIN SAMUEL CONGALTON.

CONGALTON'S memory will be cherished by many friends in the Straits. He was a brave and generous British sailor to the back-bone. His actions would have gained him an admiralship, and the service would have been proud to adopt him, had he not had the East India Company between him and Her Majesty. As it was, the Anglo-Brahminical Government gave no hopes for such a man. He was officially entitled to plain *master*; he had U.C. placed behind his name in the Government Gazette, and though he served his masters faithfully for thirty years, he did not belong to *the service* as the Bombay marine was termed. He died in harness, as many more sons of British mothers have done; the effect of neglect, climate, and want of facilities for recruiting health by leave of absence to his native country. Poor Congalton!

Congalton for many years commanded an armed cruiser belonging to the East Indian Government, and in such capacity the general public called him

"captain;" and, as such, so would Samuel Johnson. He was in constant active service, first in command of the "Zephyr" schooner, then the steamer "Diana," and latterly the "Hooghly." He cruised about the Straits and China Sea, against the Malay pirates; and many were the encounters he had, from first to last. The service was one of great danger; and, though death in it might not have been thought glorious, the more credit to him who braved death for the sake of the safety of his fellows.

He had, in his early days, a hand-to-hand fight with a nest of pirates in the Muda River; and then he proved that his sword was wielded by a firm and dexterous hand. Many were the chases, in open sea, and not a few pirates he brought to condign punishment, whether in the heat of action, or by carrying them prisoners before the calm but awe-inspiring power of the law. He frequently accompanied Her Majesty's ships of war as consort; and, by his thorough knowledge of the Malays, their craft and haunts, his presence was invaluable. His services in this respect met frequent acknowledgment. He fought his vessel in several actions when so consorted, besides he was frequently employed in the more dangerous and arduous duties of boat expeditions up the rivers. In such services he had to run the risk of being shot by hidden enemies concealed behind mangrove bushes. Such long-continued services, under a tropical sun, were surely worthy of admiration. A miserably weak govern-

ment might dislike such a man; a great and generous one would have cherished him. Let us see how he fared.

On May 18th, in the year 1838, Her Majesty's ship "Wolf," Captain Stanley, was cruising on the east coast of the Malay peninsula. When lying in a dead calm, a Chinese junk was descried defending herself from the attacks of six large Illanoon pirate prows. The man-of-war lay helpless to succour, but, by noon, the Honourable Company's steamer "Diana," Captain Congalton, was observed in the offing, approaching the "Wolf." Captain Stanley sent a gig and jolly boat to her, with orders for the "Diana" to proceed towards the junk (it appears from this that the Company's steamer was subordinate to the "Wolf"). The steamer "Diana" came up with the pirates about four in the afternoon. On seeing the smoke, the pirates thought it was a European vessel on fire, so quitted the junk and bore down on the steamer, and fired on her as she approached.* "But they now had a different sort of enemy to deal with, and the steamer stopping her paddles as she came opposite to each prow, and being able to get her guns to bear with terrible effect, poured in a destructive fire, stretching the pirates in masses on their decks. The headmost and largest prow, however, maintained a fierce resistance, protracting the contest till half-past six, when she was boarded in a half sinking state, which

* See Journ. East Indian Archipelago and Eastern Asia.

afterwards rendered it necessary to cut her adrift from the 'Diana.' The other five, favoured with a breeze, hoisted sail, and edged away to the southward with the steamer in chase, and closing upon them, when darkness coming on enabled them to effect their escape, in which they were further assisted by the tempestuous weather which succeeded. But it is believed from the shattered and disabled state to which they were reduced by the severity of the 'Diana's' fire, that they would be under the necessity of abandoning several of their vessels, and embarking their diminished numbers in one or two of the least roughly handled. It was observed that, in the pursuit, scarce any of the prows could muster more than two or three paddles a side. The prisoners we understand acknowledged to 360 men being on board the six prows, of whom 90 men were killed, and 150 wounded, 30 being prisoners on board the 'Diana,' eight of whom were desperately wounded."

Let Englishmen judge of this action. Here was a small steamer of 160 tons burden in charge of a British captain, and manned by his two European officers and a native crew of thirty Malays. This small steamer had in tow two men-of-war boats, in which sat their crews, and in which situation they could take no part in the fray. Congalton frequently averred this to me personally. His own officers and crew manned his own ship, and fought his own guns, while he towed the gig and

jolly-boats of the man-of-war, containing their respective crews, astern, ready no doubt to act as British seamen ought to do, had they had an opportunity. Thus this small steamer, under the command of Captain Congalton, attacked six formidable pirate prows, filled with brave and desperate men, the terror of these seas. The action must be admitted to be a gallant one. What of that? Next month the *Journal of the Indian Archipelago* tells us that Captain Stanley was presented with a sword, value 100 guineas, by the mercantile community of Singapore, and besides, he was entertained at a public dinner. The editor adds, "It must have been an inadvertence that no public testimony was given of their appreciation of the services of Captain Congalton of the 'Diana.'" Yes, I have always thought the neglect was scandalous, in the case of such persons as the merchants of Singapore; but, to tell the truth, there was no proper public opinion in those days. The Company's governor had great influence with the few leading men, and Mr. Bonham, who then held the reins, would have his sympathies enlisted against Congalton, whatever his judgment might be.

Now though Bob ordered Tom to go and lick big Bill, surely Bob had no credit by the deed. Yet it was decreed that Bob should have all the credit in this case. Stanley ordered Congalton to go and smash the pirates, which he did accordingly, and Stanley not only got all the credit of the action,

but he was paid handsomely for it besides. Stanley claimed 20*l.* sterling a-head for each pirate that Congalton killed or took prisoner, and he *got* it too. Under what plea this price of blood? this plea—that two boats' crews, being under Congalton's protection during the action, were consequently present—a truly flimsy argument for absorbing both credit and gain. But such was the case. Stanley took all. He would have given Congalton and his crew a portion of the prize-money; but the lower grades of his officers and men would not hear of it.

This action added great *éclat* to the laurels of the "Wolf!" It was the first check that the formidable Illanoons had received. It cleared them from off the seas entirely; and, though it does not rival Sir James Brooke's great deeds for the East, it initiated a new state of things. The cruel and formidable fleets of marauders no longer dared beard the European settlements to their teeth. No longer could they ransack the coasts for plunder and slaves. The first man that met them with an energy that paralyzed them, certainly was Captain Samuel Congalton.

I have said Stanley claimed 20*l.* a-head for each pirate destroyed or taken by Congalton; this he did under a law relating to piracy in the Mediterranean and West Indian seas. The law decided in the favour of his claim. So far, no fault can be found; still I hold that equity and fairness would indicate that he had no claim. General principles

would have advised Stanley and his officers not to have touched that thing which a brave and unrewarded man had earned for them. I trust that the officers of the "Wolf" gave their shares away in charity.

While brave in war, Congalton was active in rescue of the castaway and the shipwrecked. The ship "Sultana," Captain Page, was burnt in the China Seas, and the boats took refuge in Borneo. Here they were most inhospitably treated by the Sultan of Borneo, who plundered them of all their property. The Singapore authorities, on being made aware of the circumstance, despatched Captain Congalton and his steamer to the rescue; and on arriving at the place he managed, by his delicate tact and firm bearing, to rescue all the unfortunates from the clutches of the savages. To estimate the difficulty of the undertaking it must be mentioned that castaways such as these were accounted as property or slaves of the Sultan and his nobles; that Borneo at that time was unvisited by British men-of-war, and their power was unheeded, and the Sultan was the most powerful prince in the neighbouring seas. Captain Congalton performed his mission to the entire satisfaction of the Straits Government, and to the gratitude of the persons rescued. The position of the castaways was of the most harrowing nature. The captain, to save his daughter from the harem of the Sultan, had to feign being her husband, and the long-continued fear of such an

impending misfortune at length drove the young lady distracted.

The "Diana" was the first steamer that had appeared in Borneo; and, as such, was an object of great curiosity to the Malay nobles. Crowds visited her. When several of the chiefs were down in the engine-room to inspect the machinery, it was put in motion, to their great horror. They flew on deck in the most abject fright, crying out *dya bergrak! dya bergrak!* (it stirs! it stirs!) under the impression that it was a living monster, fed and provided for in the hold, to move the vessel as it was ordered.

This was not the only mission of rescue that Captain Congalton was employed upon. Most of the native states were visited for this purpose. Sometimes to rescue Europeans, but generally natives, the victims of piracy.

He was a man of small stature, but compact and active. His brown hair was scarcely showing grey at the age of fifty. Though trained as an apprentice in a rough school—that of the Sunderland coal trade—he was a man of the utmost delicacy of feeling, and of high principle. His manners were of the old school,—bluntness and honesty happily blended with acute perception of propriety. His ready and pungent wit rendered his conversation animated and engaging. His old saws were too good not to bear being told over again.

When he was gone, his friends in Singapore

caused a copy of his portrait to be hung in one of the public halls of the city. But as the act met the disapproval of the Governor, Colonel Butterworth, it may have since been removed, as that high functionary, of small mind, intended the same honour for himself. I happened to call on his honour shortly after my friend's portrait had been hung in the Institution; and he was very cross and ill-humoured about it. The old leaven of monopoly held strong to Governor Butterworth; so he could see no merit in one who was not of *the Service*. Strange habit, this!—the select few yellow-faced nabobs holding such contemptuous ideas against the *worthies* of all England; and yet so long supported in their monopoly by the British Parliament. *Monopoly intrudes its ugly associations into our most sacred works, whether they be of respect, love, admiration, or hallowed memory.*

CHAPTER XL.

SUNGEI KALLANG.

THIS is the largest rivulet in Singapore. Upon it once stood a sugar-mill; and, once upon a time, many joyous hours were spent in a bungalow overlooking that sugar-mill. Alas! how dead, quiet, and deserted was that same place long before I left those scenes for good! The interior of Singapore had something exciting to the young imagination; and the Sungei Kallang, at that time, was said to lead far into it. Tigers of the largest size roamed in the jungles; and the destruction of life was of daily occurrence. The gambier and pepper plantations, with which the island was studded all over, promoted their increase. The gambier plant afforded an excellent cover; and the naked, lusty Chinaman, at work in all directions, provided a food of which the animal was exceedingly fond. The jungles of Singapore were attended with sufficient danger to be attractive to the lover of adventure; and some of my Kallang friends had much of this in their

natures. One day I got a canoe, with five Malays, to paddle up on a voyage of discovery. Young M—— and B—— were with me, and also Carrol, the Canadian. Two were crack shots, and ambitious to beard a tiger to his face. B—— sang Malay songs exquisitely, and serenaded the monkeys sitting on the tall *tampenis* trees. As we proceeded up the stream, we found it covered with tall trees, overshadowing us in a manner that entirely prevented the mid-day sun from striking us with his fierce rays. The palm-trees luxuriated in the fertile soil, and the wild nut hung its peach-like fruit over our heads.

Snakes, curled up on the overhanging branches, attracted our frequent attention; and many an ugly, wreathing, venomous reptile did Carrol send to the bottom with his sure aim. We ascended for several hours, till we came to the boat of a Chinese, fastened to the bank. Here we stopped and lunched. We then fastened our boat, and moving over fallen trees, we arrived at a gambier and pepper bangsal, with its peculiar high-coned roof. Here we had a cup of tea from the hospitable Chinese, and then we sallied forth on a trudge through the jungle. We found the country undulating; alternate red hills and fat swamps, with large spaces of lalang grass. At one spot, near the edge of the great swamp, we were struck with the numerous marks of the tiger. The ground was actually pattered over with their footprints, so much so that we were glad to get

away safely from the spot. Life had frequently been lost in this neighbourhood.

The gambier and pepper plantations were not devoid of picturesqueness,—though of that rude, primitive kind which does more to repel than to charm. The Chinese employed were of a rough, independent stamp, which generally did not consort well with the self-importance of the European. But, much as I have been amongst them, I never met with inhospitality. Many had become Roman Catholics, who were easily known by an image of Christ being fixed in the position of the image of the Joss. It appeared to be an easy transition; more practical and less abstract than the transition to Protestantism.

Carrol was a character not often met with in these latitudes. He was a French Canadian, and had left his country during the troubles of 1838. He was a fierce-looking, gentle-hearted man, of little worldly knowledge, and given solely to sporting. To shoot a tiger was his great ambition; and night after night he spent in the woods; but, curious to relate, never met with his desire. All other animals, from bears to monkeys, he had killed and eaten; but a tiger, numerous as they were, never crossed his path. M—— partook of Carrol's genius also. He sat one night on the top of a bamboo bush, watching for the coming of a ferocious tiger, known to be in the neighbourhood. He sat alone, drinking brandy *pacee*, and smoking, till at

length he imagined himself surrounded by tigers, trying to get up at him to devour him. In this state he became so nervous (no wonder) that he cursed the ambition that had led him into so horrible a scrape. The bell of St. Andrew's struck one, with a deadly knell; he thought all was up. He made a frantic leap to the ground, and bated not breath till he found himself under the verandah of his own bungalow.

Tigers' heads were frequently brought into town, and the Chinese were encouraged, by rewards, to catch them in pit falls. When they were successful in securing one, it was declared a general holiday amongst the European residents, who hastened out to see the monster, and be at his death. The pit would be 14 to 15 feet deep, and a strong frame of spars would be seen to have fallen over the mouth. Two fiery globes, the tiger's eyes, would be seen at the bottom of the pit, and an occasional noise would be heard, as of rolling thunder. A long bamboo would be poked at the two globes; it would be responded to by the tiger leaping up to the very top, grasping the spars, and then falling down with a loud, hollow roar. Many bamboos would be torn to pieces in this way. Perhaps a real sportsman being present, he would suggest fair play, and the letting loose of the game; but this would be overruled by the more discreet majority. Tired of teasing the animal, lots would be drawn for their turns of shooting. This ceremony being over, shot one

would miss, responded to by a spring to the top; shot two, hits, another spring and a deep bellow; shot three, hits the forehead, this quiets the animal a little; shot four, another hit, and the tiger falls; shot five, he revives and redoubles his strength and ferocity for a moment, and then falls dead at the bottom. Having poked him well with a bamboo, and seeing no stir, the lid is taken off and the animal hauled up by the Chinese. They sell the head to Government for 100 Spanish dollars, and the flesh they sell for as much, for medicine to their countrymen. The skin may be purchased by some of the gentlemen present. Thus would end a safe system of tiger hunting—the only kind that I, being no shot, ever affected to engage in, with but one exception:

1. A French Canadian who arrived in Singapore in 1838 and who became famous for his tiger hunting expeditions.

CHAPTER XLI.

CAPTAIN WILLIAM SCOTT.

A WELL known name in the Far East is that of Captain William Scott¹; and it is, at the same time, associated with the most precious virtues of benevolence, hospitality, charity, tenderness of feeling, and true friendship. He was the friend of many men—their name is legion; and he was a true friend. Such was the character of the venerable man whose name is at the head of this Chapter.

Captain William Scott was first cousin of the illustrious poet and novelist, and he was a son of the pioneer settler of Prince of Wales Island (Penang), who was the close friend and adviser of its first governor and founder of that settlement. Thus connected, and with such personal characteristics, he had a great hold on the affections of the British in the Far East. His many eminent virtues bound his countrymen to him. The kind old man lives in the grateful memory of many now surviving.

He died a short time ago, at the ripe age of eighty-three, and the mournful news vibrated over

the most distant colonies of the British empire. Few tears are generally shed for the old, yet many tears were dropped for this patriarch.

My first acquaintance with Captain William Scott was when he might have been entering his sixtieth year. He was then hale and hearty, in possession of all his faculties. He held several appointments in the East India Company's uncovenanted civil service, which of course were anything but lucrative; and his strict integrity, and carelessness of lucre, did not advance his prospects.

In boyhood he had gone through the routine of an Edinburgh high school education; in early manhood he had borne his part as a member of the Volunteer Cavalry and Royal Archers of that city, which occupations were relinquished for private enterprise in the East Indian Archipelago. Misfortunes came upon his father's house, and his father's large estates passed into other hands.² Young William Scott was thus reduced from the position of an independent gentleman, of first-rate standing, to become a servant of the great Company holding sway in India, and as such I knew him.

His office habits were regular, though not laborious. In this respect he fully earned all that was granted to him. In his private home, necessity required that he should be plain, yet he was as generous as his means could permit. He delighted in his gardens, and he soon reared about him, out of a wilderness of jungle, a plantation that was the

admiration of every one, whether in regard to its variety, scientific regularity, or fertility.

All species of fruits, native and exotic, were found in the area of his plantation. The purple cocoa dropped its fruit beside the aromatic nutmeg. The graceful betel-nut tree stood out boldly from amongst the maze of rambutans, dukus, and durians. The sea island cotton flourished here, the gamuti palm tree there, the arrowroot yonder—how much more could not be detailed? And, in the early dawn, the old gentleman would be found cutting, planting, altering, and amending his complicated arrangements, which no one could unthread but himself. As it was, his garden afforded one of the most picturesque, shady, pleasing retreats that possibly could be imagined, illuminated as it was by the old gentleman's lustrous blue eye, his silver hair, and warm, hearty welcome.

His visitors were at once invited to partake of some of his rarities,—these might be a cup of Mocha coffee, Manilla chocolate, a tumbler of cocoa-nut milk, or varieties of fruit, all of which were his own production; and skilled was the old gentleman in describing the manner of rearing each object of his attentive care.

At table he was excellent company of that quiet intelligent class, that spurns not the good things, but "maketh merry and rejoiceth." His strong constitution enabled him to be freer with himself than many younger men, but he was never

known to exceed a quantity he could perfectly well bear, without injury to health or the remotest offence to propriety. In the times of Sir George Bonham, he was a constant guest at Government House. Sir George's experience could appreciate the value of such a man, in an isolated society, such as that of the Straits; and he felt that his noble hospitality was graced by the presence of the cousin of Sir Walter.

But times altered—it came to pass that a Pharaoh rose up, who “knew not Joseph.” The son of a shopkeeper was promoted to the government of the Straits settlements. A compound of ignorance and pomposity, such as Governor Butterworth was, could not be expected to appreciate genuine worth; so Captain William Scott fell a sacrifice. Under the habits of the good old times of Sir George Bonham, Captain William Scott, whose office was next the Governor's, continued to enjoy his cigar when thinking over the knotty matters of his duties. This habit was taken as a great personal affront—it was an offence of great magnitude. Under the same habit and custom as obtained in old times from those of Sir Stamford Raffles downwards, Captain William Scott called at the Governor's office in his every day suit of clothes (clean white). This affront was mortal. It was worse than a ryot appearing before a rajah with the hilt of his kris uncovered. So his ruin was determined on. In a despotic government such as that of the East India Com-

pany, this was a matter of great ease. It simply required two strokes of the pen by way of recommendation to the Bengal government, and the first intimation that Captain William Scott had of his offences was his dismissal, and the arrival of a *young man with peculiar interest* to take charge. *The old faithful servant was thus ousted, and his means of livelihood swept from under his feet.*

Was there any remedy for this? I think I hear my reader ask with impatience. No! there was no appeal; for appeals I never knew to be successful. Eventually, but tardily, a small pittance by way of pension was granted him; but this was no balm to an upright wounded noble heart; he felt the injustice most acutely, for he had *a great deal of Sir Walter in him.*³

1. Captain William Scott. A cousin to Sir Walter Scott and a son of James Scott, the pioneer settler of Penang. He was Harbour Master at Singapore. See p. 15.

2. James Scott's estates on Penang Island included Glugor which was taken over by David Brown.

3. A reference to his cousin, Sir Walter Scott.

CHAPTER XLII.

GUNONG POOLAI.

GUNONG POOLAI has been mentioned before, as rearing its head in the interior of the Malay peninsula. It was the highest land within thirty miles of Singapore; and its very top was coveted by an enterprising medical man.¹ Strange that a medical man should covet the very apex of a mountain in the wilderness; a few yards at the very top were all that he eagerly grasped at. The place was only to be arrived at through a dense jungle, infested with wild beasts, and piratical Malays—yet these were no obstacles to Esculapius. The top of Gunong Poolai was to be possessed by him, and the road to it was to be made by the East India Company. This requires explanation, otherwise my history of events might be seriously misbelieved.

Bengal is a sickly region, and the English of Bengal get away from it as fast as they can. The sickly require medical advice, and medical men thus make money. Now Singapore was thought to be the very place for the yellow Bengal civilian to come to,

for the sake of the great benefit to be derived from the advice of the eminent practitioners settled there. Again a cool sanatorium, in the upper regions, within reach of the consulting chamber, it was thought, would give additional inducements most desirable to the grand scheme. Gunong Poolai stood out of the Malay jungles, and nobody was making any use of it, so our doctor pitched upon it as the very spot for making an easy and rapid fortune. True it was thirty miles away from all civilized conveniences, and true its paths could only be traversed by the *jakun* and the tiger. These were no obstacle to the Doctor. His Anglo-Saxon energy pictured villas, hotels, billiard-tables, bakeries, and soda-water manufactories on the very top of his elysium, and mail-coach roads lively with busy traffic to it. I was one of the party induced to accompany the Doctor to the coveted spot, and I shall endeavour to give a full, true, and particular account of the wonders of this *terra incognita*.

We ascended the river Sakodai² as far as a boat could take us, and then made our way on foot through the jungle, till we came to a few Malay huts. Here we stopped for the night; and, next morning, piloted by some Indian convicts, we made for the mountain. We walked all day over a difficult country, and it was evening before we arrived at the small hut on the mountain constructed for our use by the convicts. The party consisted of several Europeans, and a good number of natives. Young

W—— M—— and I reached the top first—he ascribing his agility to whisky—I mine to water. The others lagged behind, overpowered by fatigue and thirst. The Doctor was carried up in a fainting state by the natives, but he and we all found ourselves pretty comfortable after a meal of hot rice and Hoffman's jam. It was dark, so no view could be obtained, and we crowded into the hut, talking and laughing to wile away the time. A young Irishman had brought his violin; and his light-hearted mirth, songs, and tunes, added no little to our entertainment. I think I hear his

"Oh, Widow Maecce,
You are dear unto me—"

still ringing in my ears. The apes and monkeys chattered in concert, and the shrill trumpeter blew his loudest notes. Drowsiness at length overtook all, and as I lay close to two Malays I listened to their interchange of ideas.

"Who could have made this mountain?" said Dolah to Che Mat.

Says Che Mat, "It must have been the *dewa dewa* (demigods)."

Says Dolah, "Yes, perhaps *Sri Rama* or *Han-doman*."

"Just so," says Che Mat.

Says I, interrupting them, "May it not have been *Tuan Allah* (the Lord God)?"

"Oh, yes, sir," said they, both evidently ashamed

of their Paganism. They were Mahomedans, but had not yet lost the traditions of their forefathers.

We did not sleep very soundly, but were astir early to gain the summit, which we had not reached the night before; but when we arrived at what was thought the summit, our disappointment was great to find that we had been guided to the eastern mountain, which is much lower than the western, and between which an immense gulph yawned. Our thermometer showed a temperature only 5° lower than what it stands at on the plain, consequently we could not have attained above 1500 feet of elevation. Our provisions ran out, so we had to return that day. By noon we slung our guns on our backs and scampered down the mountain. Young W—— M—— and I led the van, which was the cause of our losing a great treat, viz., an encounter with two rhinoceroses; one of which was shot, the other escaped. The dead rhinoceros was held to be a trophy of great distinction, so the finder got the head by way of precedence, and the hind feet fell to my share. What took us a whole day to go, only took us four hours to return; for in that space of time we arrived at the Malay village, where we slept that night. On the next morning we visited some Chinese miners searching for tin, but they had not met with success. Leaping into our boat again, we descended the *Sakodai* and arrived off *Krangee*³ by dark. Here the Doctor and I left the party, intending to ride across the island

of Singapore, by the road just then newly finished. Our horses were expected to be at the first Chinese *gambier bangsal* (gambier works), so we made for it.

It was now pitch dark, and we had great difficulty in groping our way through the close high scrub, but at length we arrived at the *bangsal*, and stood before the outer gate. On our first appearance a great hubbub took place among the Chinese, the cause of which was that they had lately been attacked by Malays, so they were more than ordinarily alert for such episodes in their backwood habitation. The *bangsal* was stockaded round, and on the Doctor and I advancing to the gate, the inmates evidenced the greatest alarm, and at length set upon us with spears and double swords. The Doctor was a brave man, so by advancing too closely to the stockade, got nearly thrust through by a spear; fortunately his white dress was seen in the dark. He was recognised as an *orang putih* (white man) by the Chinese, who immediately dropped their warlike demonstrations, and with great joy opened the door and let us in.

On asking the *tokay* (head man) about our horses, it appeared that they were at the next *bangsal*, so after a cup of tea with the old man, we departed, and got the horses at the place indicated. A ride of fifteen miles over a good level road brought us into town by early morning, and thus ended the Doctor's inroad upon the savage wilds of the Malay peninsula.

The scenery from the top of *Gunong Poolai* proved neither interesting nor attractive. A horrid gloomy sameness pervaded the land in all directions, and the Straits and islands to the south were too distant to give relief to this characteristic. The interior was found to be one mass of tall forest, unspotted by either prairies or cultivation. To the north our view was intercepted by a higher range, but to the east we could recognize *Lulumut*, *Sambilayang*, and *Mintaka*.⁴ The formation was granitic.

The interior of the Malay peninsula was better known to the early Portuguese than to either the Dutch or the English, as is proved by their old maps. Gray lost his life by traversing the peninsula from Pahang to Malacca, but Favre and J. R. Logan were more fortunate in making their way over much the same ground, more to the southward, without injury to their health.

1. This was Dr Robert Little of Edinburgh, who arrived in Singapore in 1840 and practised there for over thirty years.

2. Now spelt Sekudai.

3. Now spelt Krauji.

4. Now known as mounts Belumut, Samalayang and Munahak.

CHAPTER XLIII.

THE JEW OF BAGDAD.

THERE was an oriental Jewish merchant in Singapore called Abraham Solomon,¹ a man of patriarchal appearance, and majestic mien—a man who might have sat to a sculptor as a model of the father of the faithful. He dressed in the flowing robes of the East, and a large turban covered his head. His complexion was fair, his eyes jet black and brilliant, his nose aquiline, his brow high; his hair, once black, was now grey, and his beard, the most capacious I had ever seen, flowed down over his breast. He was a man of large stature, and his arms and legs were proportionably stout, covered with black hair. Such was the personal appearance of Abraham Solomon, the Jew of Bagdad.

He was given to hospitality, and I believe a friend² of mine and myself were the first Europeans that entered his house, and partook of his good things. Such being the case, the incident relating thereto will not be unworthy of record. My friend was his law adviser, which was the cause of our invitation.

Abraham Solomon at that time lived in the mercantile quarter, and his house fronted the Boat Quay. At dusk we repaired to his abode, and were received with great warmth. Entering the shop door, we were taken through the hall and carried up to an upper verandah facing the inner court, where we found the repast already spread out. The table was laid out for four, and our host's brother made the fourth. The table was a large round one, and we sat in arm-chairs. The cloth was as clean as a new pin, and tall champagne glasses stood beside each plate. The table furnishings were European, in honour of his guests, otherwise all was oriental.

Our host could not speak English, so the Malay language had to do duty in our interchange of courtesies. It must be admitted that this language was a poor medium for so important an occasion; but good feelings and intentions made up all deficiencies. Our host first pressed us to fill our glasses, and quaff a bumper, before commencing on the solids, and this was readily acceded to by all of us. The viands consisted of capons, mutton, and fowls, made up in various well-seasoned dishes, and our host was particular in explaining to us that all flesh had been most carefully killed by the priest, and that all the oil used was extracted from animals so killed. He dwelt much on this subject, which seemed to him a most important one, and he assured us that, during his life time, he had always been

most rigid in observing the laws of Moses on these points, and, in so doing, felt that his life had been holy, and his body clean. Meantime, the champagne flowed pretty freely, and our host's heart expanded. And as he chatted away, his memory reverted to Bagdad, and his younger days in that city. He spoke in ecstasies of the date, grape, and the fig—not obtainable in Singapore. He then spoke of his father's house, and the oppressions thereof under a Mahomedan government. "At length," said he, "the oppressions became so grievous, that we had to flee the country. The soles of my feet were beaten till they were raw; for they wished to torture me into disclosing treasures that I had not."

Another glass, and our host proceeded, "And when I came to an English settlement, I expected that the honourable of the land would be honoured, but hear, my friends, what I have to say. Business took me to the police office, to make a complaint before the magistrate. I walked into the common hall before the seat of justice, expecting to be received, if not with courtesy, at least without ignominy. Fancy my astonishment and indignation, when two police peons grappled me by the throat, tore my clothes, and pulled off my shoes by order of the magistrate. I flung myself out of his presence with scorn at such treatment. I, who own ships, and have English captains in my service, and thousands embarked east and west, to be treated

as a dog by a red-haired young lieutenant!—it is preposterous! My friends, do not be angry with me for mentioning this while you are my guests. I ought not to have done so, as the magistrate is an Englishman, like yourselves.”

We sympathised with the old gentleman, and fully concurred in condemning his treatment. As Europeans, we were willing to find excuses, but I fear we failed. When youth and folly sat in the seat of judgment, and this was too common a rule under the Company's *raj*, what else could be expected? Pride drove the Portuguese out of Japan three centuries ago, this should be a lesson to the English. *Such ignominies are deep seated, and long remembered by the native gentlemen who experience them.* We have only to judge of ourselves on this point.

The good things soon dissipated what little feeling ebbed out on this subject. The savoury condiments, concocted in the inner apartments by delicate and unseen hands, delighted our palates, and restored good humour, while betimes coffee was served as a sedative.

Our host was a leading man amongst his tribe, and had much to do with the synagogue. The subject of religion was avoided, for he believed that the Messiah was yet to come, but he brought out a large scroll of Hebrew manuscript, which he said was the Mosaic law as read in the synagogue. It was beautifully written on parchment, and with a

ious, though we thought fanatical, reverence, he would not allow us to touch it. My friend was an enthusiastic inquirer into the manners, customs, and literature of the East. He was not disconcerted at this, but seemed philosophically to study our host in the shape of an ethnological subject. He looked upon this Oriental Jew as a medium by which some dim idea might be gained of the many curious facts related in the Scriptures, and which the western Christian has no means of unlocking.

As a case in point, I may relate, that on my return from India, I attended a parish church service in a village in the south of Scotland. The minister in reading a chapter, came to a verse which says, "King David went up to the Temple with his keys over his shoulder." The good minister, hummed at this, and at length said, "My friends, the keys in ancient times were no doubt so big that it was necessary to carry them on the shoulder." Little did he think that there was an Englishman from the Far East listening to him, and who had for years been daily accustomed to see Orientals carrying their keys over their shoulders tied to the corners of their pocket-handkerchiefs, the opposite corners being used to carry a little *serce* and *botel*.

But to return. Our host's excessive strictness regarding the oil that he used with his food is quite in keeping with the customs of his countrymen of old, as described by Flavius Josephus, who, in talk-

ing of the honourable position the Jews obtained from the kings of Asia, used this argument :*—“That whereas the Jews do not make use of oil prepared by foreigners, they receive a certain sum of money, from the proper officers belonging to these exercises, as the value of that oil, which money, when the people of Antioch would have deprived them of in the last war, Mucianus, who was then President of Syria, preserved it to them.” Thus we could not but be interested in this native of the region of ancient Chaldea, and note the tenacity with which he clung to the customs and prejudices of his forefathers.

Herodotus, in describing the army of Xerxes about to descend on Greece, proves the clothing of the ancient Oriental to be much the same as it is at present. The Persians wore on their heads loose coverings called tiaras, on their legs loose trousers. The Cissians wore mitres instead of turbans. The Bactrians wore turbans very much like those of the Medes. The Indians were clad in garments of cotton, having bows and arrows of cane. The Arabians wore cloaks fastened by a girdle. The Ethiopians, panthers' and lions' skins. How correct would this description appear at the present day, must be admitted by Oriental travellers; and, in Abraham Solomon, it was no great stretch of the imagination to see a type of an unchanged race, for his physiognomy was an exact counterpart of the

* See “Jewish Antiquities,” book xii. chap. iii. verse 1.

ancient profiles cut in stone, as exhumed by Layard, in the country of his birth. It could not be found fault with, therefore, *that* my friend and I, having taken our leave (considerably helped, no doubt, by the exhilarating champagne), should have thrown our minds back twenty-five centuries, and endeavoured to portray the times of Necho and Nabopolassar. We were charmed with the idea that we had sat, that night, with the true type of the contemporaries of those great kings of kings and lords of lords over Egypt and Assyria.

I do not mean to speak of our host in unmeasured terms of approbation. As an Oriental, he was narrow-minded, and probably fanatic; further, he was ostentatious and pharisaical. Having been reared under a Mahomedan government, he detested their religion because he had come into unamiable contact with its professors. With the high consciousness of the unequalled antiquity of his own faith, he patronized the Christian as only one remove from himself, for were not his prophets our prophets—his Bible our Bible? and did we not owe this to him? He might not agree with facile Josephus in saying, "Let no one blaspheme those gods which other cities esteem as such, nor may any one steal what belongs to the strange temples, nor take away the gifts that are dedicated to any god." The allurements of commerce brought him in contact with the cosmopolitan merchants of Singapore, and so he may have had some of his native

antipathies rubbed off. But this would influence him only so far. Though he explained that a Christian could dine with him, he was careful to remark that he could not dine with a Christian; and so our social intercourse ended. For once, his company was interesting; but as it could not be repeated on equal terms, I only this time broke bread with Abraham Solomon the Jew of Bagdad.

1. See p. 310. *An Anecdotal History of Old Times in Singapore* by C. B. Buckley for a portrait of Solomon.

2. The 'friend' was either Abraham Logan or his younger brother, James. Both Logans were practising lawyers in Singapore and from 1843 to 1844 Abraham shared house with Thomson, where James also joined them for a time.

CHAPTER XLIV.

THE EURASIAN FAMILY.

It will be a matter of interest to see how the social system works amongst the descendants of the British in the Far East, and to gratify such curiosity I shall describe my impressions while I boarded in the house of a family of Anglo-Indians, now generally known as Eurasians. That no confidence may be broken I shall not indicate the Settlement. The house may have been in any of the three in the Straits of Malacca. But it is needless even to mention this, for a quarter of a century has not left a single member of that family a survivor. Alas! all are gone hence.

The head of the family was of mixed race, but educated in Europe. His wife was of pure British blood, but was reared and educated in India. The husband had children before his marriage by native women; his wife had been married before, and had children by both her husbands. All lived together in great amity in the same house. Some of the children were as dark as Hindoos, others as fair as

Swedes; but there was this difference made, and admitted to be correct on all sides, that the fair ones went out to evening parties, while the dark ones stayed at home. The fair ones were expected to take a leading part, and so were attentively educated; the dark ones were intended for more humble usage, and so had little spirit in them. Such were the arrangements that a happy Eurasian family fell into, without involving dispute or disagreement. The wife was a daughter of a Protestant missionary who had buried seven wives, and she had lived to bury more than one husband. She was a busy, scolding, merry being, proud of her pure blood, and devotedly respected by all her household, if we may except the white children, who were somewhat wayward and unruly.

Amongst the rest, the husband, poor man! would sometimes get his scolding, which he would bear in silence till his better half was out of hearing; then he would call his dark children together around him—for there was close sympathy between him and them—and then he would give way to his injured feelings, muttering complaints against his own father, who fell into the disagreeable mistake which made him, his son, of coloured complexion; nor did he seem to be aware of his own mistakes in the children now before him.

The wife, though of pure European blood, had more of the native in her than had her husband. She talked loud, and *makiel* (used abusive language)

with great gusto in the Malayan language; and, in so doing, she would use expressions which modesty should have taught her to avoid. In this respect, while scolding her native servants, the freedom and license she used was most astonishing. This was the effect of her Oriental rearing, no defect of morality on her part. It is a habit unconsciously derived from the natives, who speak more plainly on such subjects than is allowed in English conversation. Indeed I could not write the words that escaped the lips of our hostess. When she spoke English, her conversation was always marked by due propriety.

The family was a large one, and the house was a merry one. The young Eurasian ladies of the neighbouring houses would frequently step in during the evenings, when the piano would be had in requisition to accompany the song or the dance. On these occasions the strictest propriety was maintained; and I cannot recall to memory the slightest breath of scandal connected with any of the gentler sex, who illuminated these gay happy meetings with their joyous and virtuous presence. Had I not had strong home instincts, I could have found a partner there; but it was not to be. Many of the young ladies were accomplished pianists and singers, so the hours sped fast on these occasions. It was generally after twelve or one, before these meetings broke up, and pleasant were the moonlight walks while escorting them safely to their homes.

All earthly things have their alloy, and so had this house. The family having been long settled in the country, held slaves prior to the abolition of slavery in the British dominions. Some of the slaves still clung to the family. One of them, an old woman, had a young daughter, who served in the house as *ayah* (nursemaid); now as she became marriageable, the lady of the house began to think of danger to her elder sons, and the old slave woman began to think of the advantage of creating a connection with her mistress's family. This would be a source of gain to herself, and give her ease and comfort for life. Here were conflicting opinions with a vengeance. Suspicions, at first only suggesting themselves, at length became apparent, so the *ayah* had to be got rid of by marriage to one of her own kindred as fast as possible. A committee of old ladies was held on the subject, and *Menga* was told of her destiny. But, to the horror of the mammas, *Menga* stoutly gave them to understand that she would take no one but the white son of her mistress. Try as they liked, she would have nothing to do with an *orang hitam* (black man).

I relate these things with no idle object, but with the view of clearly illustrating the fragile ground on which families of Europeans in the East maintain their purity of origin. *Climate weakens their energies, and deteriorates their moral powers, which are the real foundations of their great influence. The cold, virtuous, Anglo-Saxon habits, are, by inexorable nature,*

too surely replaced by self-indulgent patriarchal tendencies.

I recollect once meeting with an intelligent Dutch civilian, of great experience in the government of the Netherlands India. He assured me that a great grandchild of pure European blood, was not known in the wide extent of the Dutch possessions; and, further, that it was the opinion of the medical faculty, that pure blood could not be propagated there. This so much agreed with my own limited observations, that I was strongly impressed with the curious physiological fact at the time. This question has bearings so intimate on what will be one of the leading questions in the British Indian empire, that I make no apology for introducing it here.

CHAPTER XLV.

THE DELHI MOONSHEE.

BEING anxious to learn the Hindostanee language, I was referred, by my Parsee friend, Framjee Sorabjee, to a tall, gaunt-looking man, with a large turban, and long white flowing robes, and engaged his services accordingly. Golab Hussain had been got rid of by the government of Upper India, under the pretext of sedition; and he had served his seven years out before I made his acquaintance. He was as different from a Malay, as chalk is from cheese. Exceedingly deferential, a smile never lighted up his prominent features. Half an hour was always plenty of time for making friends with a Malay, or at least for knowing him,—a twelvemonth passed over and I may say I was as far from the Delhi moonshee's confidence as ever.

He spoke little of himself; but things oozed out at times, which led me to believe that he had, at one time, taken an active political part in his native land. He was a Mahomedan, with Hindoo instincts. In this respect he was not unlike an English Bengal

civilian of old standing. He had been a handsome man, but careworn furrows now ploughed his face, yet an eagle black eye still gave vitality to it. With the cringing servile habits of Hindostan, he left his shoes at the bottom of the stairs, and walked over the rough mats on his bare feet. A leprous affection marked his skin with white spots. Let us see what his mind was.

It took days to obtain an idea of this ; but, after the tedium of the daily task was over, the light topics of the day were generally discussed, and then was the time to study my instructor. He was well acquainted with the names and actions of all the leading men amongst the English in India, from Clive downwards, and he was posted up particularly in all their shortcomings. Thus it may be surmised that, while he acknowledged them to be *burra bahadoors* (great warriors), he had no high opinion of their general morality. Of Lord Teignmouth, he used frequently to relate, with a sneer, how that gentleman endeavoured to expunge the most common term out of the Hindostanee language. It was *Mat shore kurro* (be silent), a most useful expression amongst the gabbling Bengalese. Now 'Shore' was Lord Teignmouth's family name, and the constant vociferation of it in every court, lane, and street, annoyed him much. So *shore* had to be altered to *gurberah* in his presence.

He related much the same story about a civilian called Patullo. Now *patullo* is a favourite vegetable

constantly hawked about the streets. This annoyed the great man so much, that he incarcerated, whipped, and fined the natives till they learned to call the vegetable *sayer*. This no doubt would hold good till a relative of Tom Sayers came, when the name would have to be altered again. So much for the littlenesses of great Englishmen.

Apparently the hanger-on of some large English garrison of Upper India, he was well acquainted with the backstair movements of their households, and he took much delight in dilating on this subject. The extent of intrigue, immorality, and licentiousness which he disclosed, astonished me. The names of the parties he made no difficulty in disclosing to me, but delicacy would be offended, and no good attained, by proceeding further into this subject. It was evident that he had a grossly false estimate of my countrywomen; so, with morbid taste, he enlarged on one or two unhappy occurrences of notoriety; and, with a jaundiced and prejudiced view, he was unable to appreciate the virtue of the thousand. To the impure, all things are impure, and it would have been impossible for him to have judged otherwise. So much for the Delhi moonshee's estimate of the morality of the English women.

One night I saw the moonshee was very uneasy about something; and, after several inquiries, I at length persuaded him to explain his trouble. With many circumlocutions, he at length narrated his

fears about returning home in the dark. "For," said he, "I ask a thousand pardons, but as the Company (meaning the Government of the Honourable East India Company) are in want of heads to put below the church tower (St. Andrew's), I am afraid to go home by myself." I laughed, and reasoned, but, seemingly, with very little effect; for he still contended that natives had gone amissing; and further, that he himself had seen the *bundawan* (native convicts) chasing some Malay, with the great sticks that they felled the dogs with, and everybody said it was for the sake of their heads, which are wanted for the church tower.

"Nonsense, monshee," said I. "How can you think such a thing of the English Government?"

"Oh," said he, "Sir, a thousand heads are required for the spirit to whom the church is dedicated, and they must have them to keep him in good humour."

Such was the moonshee's idea of the mildness and paternal love of Christianity; and it was a most common idea amongst the natives of all classes.

He was the victim of rumours, and they had a great effect on his mind. One night he came in great tribulation about the flood that was to take place. It had been predicted by some fakeer of his acquaintance, and was soon to occur. The whole town was to be swamped by a huge wave, and this certainly within a few days; but with the apathy of tropical natives, the moonshee made no preparations for the great event.

I have said the moonshee was a Mahomedan, and I may add that he hated Pagans with a zest. Towards the Chinese he had a very deep abhorrence, which was particularly amusing. I was astounded at his revelations regarding the Chinese, and thankful that at least there were worse people than the English in this great earth of many nations, tongues, and kindreds.

In Hogarth's pictorial histories much that is disgusting is portrayed, but they are nothing to what the Delhi moonshee did suggest that night. Such were his views with regard to mankind. How typical of his own mind!

Now why should I relate these things? Simply to show that there was a foundation laid—long, long laid in the native mind—for the events of 1856, the materials of which consisted of *hideous calumnies, infamous imaginations, blind prejudices, rancorous hatred*. These were all stored up under the mild obsequious garb of the Delhi moonshee and his congeners, and ready to burst forth with spasmodic energy on any given occasion. (There is great ferocity under the smooth skin of the Bengal tiger.) 'Tis thus that I account for the barbarous heart-rending massacre of the innocent, pure, faithful ladies at Cawnpore, and the horrid atrocities that were enacted in other parts.

CHAPTER XLVI.

THE SERENADE.

It was a great relief from the every-day business of life to get away from Singapore occasionally, and this I did as often as I had opportunity. A sail in the calm Straits is at all times refreshing, and with a comfortable cabin and merry boat's crew, the time was pleasantly beguiled. On this occasion I was in a small lugger, with ten or twelve Javanese sailors, commanded by a Javanese *juragon*. The wind had failed us, so we anchored off the large red cliffs in the evening to await the return of tide. The night was one of the many calm starry nights which precede the setting in of the south-west monsoon. The water was as calm as glass, and not a "cat's-paw" could be detected on the surface. I laid myself down on my Siamese mat, and had been sleeping for some time, when I dreamt of sweet sounds, so soothing to the yearning mind. These sounds became gradually more apparent, and I found myself awake. I listened with renewed curiosity, and surely enough the distant yet sonorous echoes of a Javanese band

fell on the ear. So distant did the music appear that I fancied the sounds must come from the shore ; but this could not be, as we were full two miles from the land. I listened again ; there were the metallic notes of the *gambelang* clicking up and down from bass to tenor. The full sonorous notes of the *gong* struck in at times, and the *tomtom* was beaten quickly and vigorously. Could there be a musical box on board ? No, that could not be, for no musical boxes play Javanese tunes. I listened now with eagerness, charmed with the unexpected treat. I lay some time, and the music ceased, but only to renew its soft soothing charms. At length, roused to satiate my curiosity, I crept out from below the awning, and, to my astonishment, there was the old juragon and his whole crew squatted round a blazing lamp, drawing up and contorting their mouths in all possible and ludicrous shapes ; nor was my astonishment abated when I observed that the music that so charmed me emanated from these same mouths. I laughed outright at the clever mimicry. This put a stop to the entertainment, for the whole crew disappeared, as if by magic, into the various nooks of the lugger.

The Javanese have a naturally full-toned sonorous voice, which is well adapted for imitating their own native instruments ; and I afterwards learned that the native juragon, or captain, was a play actor by profession, and that most of his crew followed the same calling. Thus they had been accustomed to

beguile their long night watches by mimic concerts, such as that which had awakened me, and which had kept me so long in a state of charmed bewilderment.

This scene has always been remembered as one of the happy episodes of my long sojourn in the Far East.

CHAPTER XLVII.

CAPITAN DONKER.

CAPITAN DONKER, known to the natives as "Juragon Gumok," was of Dutch descent, a scion of the Malacca nobility. I was so fortunate as to make this great man's acquaintance on board the gunboat No. —, which was commanded by him. She was a vessel of twenty-seven tons burden, carried two carronades and twenty-seven fighting Malays. The capitan was a man of portly appearance, brave as an alligator, even though he was entertained by his munificent masters, the Honourable East India Company, with the handsome pay of fifty rupees (5*l.* sterling) a month, rice and salt-fish included. He was a man calculated to uphold the dignity of the Straits Government amongst the native traders, for whose protection he cruised about the famous headland called Point Romania;¹ not that the native traders were over-anxious of being overhauled, whether for concealed arms, or for sugar, and coconuts, as these latter were sure to assist the Honourable Company's allowance in some shape or another.

Failing the native trade, the capitan was a man clever at devising projects to make his salary keep his soul within his shirt. Thus, having twenty-seven men at his command, there was no reason why they should be idle, so what they could not catch from man, they could catch from the sea. The rocks were clean and dry, and a fishing establishment was soon extemporized near either the Diana Cove,² or Labuan Pahang. These were the capitan's favourite retreats, for here his gunboat could lie as quietly as in a mill-pond. No rocking or tossing here to disturb the capitan's slumbers in the small hours of the morning; and here also were the bays full of rare fish, such as the *suangan*, *tingiri*, or *blanah*. The crew would relieve each other in these pursuits till the capitan had filled the gunboat's hold, when off he would hie to make a ready and profitable sale in the bazaars of Singapore. His absence was scarcely regretted by the native trade, and especially by the Pahang boats, bringing fat fowls and turtle eggs to market, for both of which the capitan had a peculiar fondness, well known to the native traders.

The capitan was an uncovenanted servant, which accounted for the liberal manner in which he was treated by his honourable masters. But this subject was beneath the capitan's notice, seeing that he had such ready tact to take advantage of all contingencies. I think I now see him sitting on his after deck, leaning against his useful gun, a red

nightcap on his head, and a pair of drawers on his nether man,—his sole and cool man-of-war's suit. There he sits on the deck, tailor fashion, with large plates of boiled rice before him, curried fish and fowl, no end of condiments, supplied to his cabin by his old grandmother of Banda Eliar. The capitan's conscience was an easy one, so his appetite was good. A native of the country, he had not the European's torment (*dyspepsia*) to mar his enjoyment. His appetite was great, and his bliss supreme, when it was over a great dinner in one of the quiet bights near Point Romania.

But I had almost forgotten to do the capitan full justice. The capitan was paid to put down piracy in his cruising-ground, and here his services shone conspicuously. The pirates kept clear of his stately awe-inspiring spitfire. It was pulled by sweeps, and could then proceed at one knot per hour, while the piratical boats pulled at the rate of five. Whether or not this was a humane arrangement on the part of the East India Company, to save their fighting servants from bloodshed, I must leave the heads of the Marine department to answer; but certain it is that it was an arrangement of which Bright, Cobden, and Co. would highly approve, as it was very favourable to their pets, the Malay pirates. Under the above circumstances, when the capitan met in with pirates, they used to ask him to pull hard, and they might take pity on him. On such occasions it was amusing to see the capitan's fury; he would

rage, bellow, and swear, and shake his fist at his sworn enemies. His highest ambition was to catch pirates, and his most strenuous endeavours were made to get them hanged, for they disturbed his rest at night; they interfered with his fishing pursuits; they buzzed about him like sand-flies; in fact, on all sides they tormented what would have been as peaceful a life as is vouchsafed to human nature, for Congalton had already cleared the seas of the Illanoons.

I recollect one occasion on which the commodore was favoured with a glorious nibble at a pirate. He was anchored in Labuan Pahang, and, with the capitan's permission, some of the crew had landed in the bight to search for shell-fish; when one of the Lascars came in a terrible fright, crying *perompah! perompah!* They were into the sampan in a jiffy, and fled ignominiously to the gunboat. The capitan's great experience detected something wrong, so he up anchor and bore down for the bight, loaded his guns, and cleared deck for action. When the Lascars arrived, the cause was explained in breathless haste. A real Gallang pirate prow, with thirteen men, was lying concealed behind the rocks. The capitan displayed all the traits of a great commander. Girding on his rusty sword and holster pistols, he leaped into the sampan, followed by his crew, till the water reached the gunwale, and pulled for the shore under the cover of the guns of his vessel. On touching the shore, all leaped out and

ran most manfully to the encounter. Alas! how seldom does bravery meet its opportunities! The birds had flown into the mazes of the impervious jungle, leaving their old weather-worn prow, some Siamese rice and old mats, as a trophy to the gallant capitan, to carry back to Singapore and display to the admiring view of his honourable—I will not say liberal—masters. Such is life. The capitan's fell on barren ground; his great deeds bore little fruit.

Capitan Donker was a man of discretion, as well as valour. His sagacity foresaw that something must be done for the money his honourable masters laid out in maintaining his ship and crew. His honourable masters must be convinced of his devotion to the service; and his discretion led him to adopt a most ingenious plan, well worthy of the highest approbation. This thing must be done—pirates must be caught, occasionally; and how to do it without risk to body and limbs,—there was the rub! Capitan Donker was equal to the occasion. His innate sagacity suggested a plan which, I am sure, will stamp him as a hero, not even surpassed by Sir John, of merry memory.

Capitan Donker maintained one or two Gallang men amongst his crew, sworn to lead their chief into no scrape, and to get him out of them if ill-luck would have it notwithstanding. Che Moosa, his favourite Gallang pirate, was a pet on board, treated to all the dainties, and allowed to sit aft and amuse his master in the dull evenings. Che

Moosa was an old pirate, and, by freaks of fortune, was in higher estimation than the honest Malacca Malays who composed the crew; for was he not there ostensibly to point out the haunts of the pirates, and thus to open a road for distinction to his commander?

So it was on landing that day. Che Moosa far outstripped the capitan and all his crew. Brandishing his cutlass most manfully, he made alone for the concealed sea-robbers; well-known signals passed; and the band dispersed into the bush. The boat was thus taken without resistance, and the gallant capitan magnanimously sheathed his sword, launched the prize, and returned to head-quarters to relate his victories, and to accept the honours due to his devotion to the public service.

And what became of the prize? This was easily managed. It was put up to auction for the benefit of the Honourable East India Company, and bought in by Che Moosa for a mere song; and further, it was paid for from the proceeds of cured fish and Pahang turtle-eggs, benevolently supplied by the capitan. The pirate boat was then duly returned to the owners, who, having made their way to Punggerung, arrived at Singapore as soon as the gun-boat.

1. Now spelt Rammia, the south-east tip of Peninsular Malaysia.

2. Named after Captain Congalton's vessel, the *Diana*.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

GOVERNOR BUTTERWORTH.¹

My "Glimpses of Life in the Far East," I feel, would be incomplete were I to pass unnoticed the above official, who held the reins of government for so many years, during which I sojourned in these regions. In some private letters of Sir James Brooke, which were unexpectedly published to the world, the above official was dubbed *Butter-pot the Great*—a sobriquet which appeared to the general public so apt, that he became better known by it than by his real name.

Butterworth afforded rather an eccentric and prominent example of an East India Company's official, as he was imbued with many of the weaknesses which a monopoly of power and honour is sure to foster in human nature. When the East India Company lost their trade monopoly, they clung the more desperately to their governmental monopoly. Thus *all position, honour, or emoluments* were held as solely and wholly belonging to the "Service"—that is, to the young men appointed at the India

House, in Leadenhall Street. The consequence was, that not only was the choice of public servants drawn from a very limited circle, but the complete absence of opposition in the Indian career spoilt these public servants. They were placed above the public; they were made secure in their fortunes and pensions, and so had no spur to urge them to exertion or emulation, or to thorough attention to their various duties. The real duties generally devolved on free and badly-paid Englishmen, who were termed "uncovenanted;" and it was fortunate for the public when this was the case, otherwise the duties and responsibilities were handed over to cringing natives, who enriched themselves at their countrymen's expense, and to the great disrepute of the Anglo-Indian Government.

Governor Butterworth was what was termed in the East a hard-working man; that is, he sat tenaciously in his office-chair from ten to four daily. He wrote long letters to the Bengal Government; and was useful so far as his abilities carried him. In a country like India, much of the governmental responsibility is considered to lie in keeping the natives quiet, and the Europeans in good humour. The Straits Government was a sinecure, in the real sense of the term; for, although in the centre of commerce, it was far separate and divided from any powerful Asiatic nations with whom complications might arise. Thus, while great events were going on in Burmah, China, Java, and Cochin-China, no-

thing whatever was going on in the sparsely populated Malay peninsula or Sumatra. The Government of the Straits was actually of very small importance; so the Government of India came to the conclusion that any one would do for it. Hence Butterworth, without any knowledge of the language, of the natives, or the remotest idea of the political state of the Far East, was appointed governor—and that over two eminently qualified civilians, Blundell and Church, whose claim (seniority) was considered, up to this time, unquestionable.

Church, as the senior, according to practice should have succeeded Sir George Bonham; but unfortunately for him, as was currently reported, Sir Herbert Maddock had found out that he did not give good dinners. This difficulty was felt to be insurmountable. Then Blundell, as the next, had not been sufficiently subservient when employed as Commissioner of Tenasserim, so he could not be thought of. Otherwise he was well qualified, having always been in the habit of giving good dinners. The eminent sagacity and great experience of these two high civil servants had no weight; so Butterworth was thought of by Lord Ellenborough,³ who accidentally met him at the Cape of Good Hope. Butterworth's good fortune was ascribed by the public, partly to Lord Ellenborough's *penchant* for red coats, partly to his admiration of portly figures and humble toadyism. Above all other considerations, the Bengal Government were aware of Butterworth's dinner-giving

propensities. The members of council, one and all, declared that the best road to men's hearts was through the stomach—a sentiment most profound. This carried the day, and Colonel Butterworth was appointed Governor of the Straits Settlements.

I may now proceed with my portrait. Governor Butterworth was a good-looking man, upright in carriage, punctilious in manners, commanding in address. A large scar on his temple might have been a *telwar* (sword) wound, but the ill-natured said it was owing to a nursery-maid's negligence. To end surmises, a carefully preserved military coat was shown as a proof of bravery seldom to be exceeded. A hole in that coat was pointed out to the astonished gaze: still envy suggested a remark that the hole was in the tail.

Advanced to the charge of the Straits Settlements, Governor Butterworth sheathed his sword for a statesman's portfolio. He was anxious to compose the differences of his subjects; and, fortunately for him, he had an able adviser in Thomas Church, who would rather have Butterworth governor than his rival Blundell. The intricacies of Chinese land disputes first engaged Butterworth's attention. True, legally, he had no right to adjudicate in these matters, as the causes should have gone to Her Majesty's Court of Judicature; but it served the purpose of putting him into his saddle, and giving a virgin taste of power. He would puzzle himself in trying to unravel the intricacies of these disputes,

even though he did not understand a single word uttered by the disputants, nor could he follow a single argument advanced. However, he always came to a verdict satisfactory to himself, which used to run to this effect, "*that Kimying's cause commenced in a maze of doubt, and ended in a labyrinth of uncertainty.*" The inquiring, woe-begone, incredulous expression of the Kimyings on such occasions was ludicrous to the bystander, however ruinous to the individual the verdict might be.

Butterworth, with all his pomposity, had his troubles, such as they were. One cause of trouble and anxiety to him was an old Scotch merchant, whom, for the sake of perspicuity, I shall call Crabwinch.⁴ This merchant was rich, but radical in his politics and tendencies; so he was highly popular and powerful. Butterworth had consequently great respect for old Crabwinch; but Crabwinch would not condescend to call on his honour, so no acquaintance could be arrived at. Old Crabwinch swayed the European mind through the Chamber of Commerce, and the native mind through Tomungong, or native chief; thus, if respected by the East India Company's high official, he was at the same time feared. Old Crabwinch drove fine chariots and horses, even to the eclipsing of Governor Butterworth's. And often did the two great men prance past each other on the evening parade; but old Crabwinch was obdurate. He believed all men to be equal, so passed Butterworth without seeing him. This

independence raised the imaginary power of old Crabwinch even the more. How often were counsels held to win his smiles and countenance! For, were he gained, all the little presidency would bend the neck.

Old Crabwinch was not approachable, by fair means or foul. This rigidity was not to be borne. The magnanimous Butterworth, duly considering the great interests in his hands, felt that abasement must be personally borne rather than the non-attainment of old Crabwinch's patronage. So, with an abrogation of self, he at last humbly took off his hat to the burly old Crabwinch, when passing in his chariot; and thus he secured the long coveted friendship! Old Crabwinch was a vain man; he was also a greedy Scotchman, who cared for nothing but his own interests, and quickly was his condescension turned to account. He got a grant of Pulo—for next to nothing, and sold it soon afterwards for 500*l.* profit. Ah, greedy, radical old Crabwinch!

One of Butterworth's greatest loves, was the love of his profession. He was constant in the enunciation of this: indeed, so much did he live in this his love, that he divided all mankind into colonels, captains, ensigns, sergeants, corporals, and privates. No private gentleman, in his estimation, had any rank in society. The wealthy merchant's lady ranked only as the wife of a serjeant-major, a clerk's as a corporal's, and a tradesman's as a pri-

vate's. Wealth, birth, or learning, had no status under his government. The Emperor of all the Russias could not have more starched ideas on these subjects than had Butter-pot the Great. His extraction, it is true, was from behind the counter; yet, with *wonderful* consistency, he drew a rigid line between tradesmen and gentlemen of no trade. The Lord Mayor of London himself, if he were a shopkeeper, could not have obtained admission to the little Singapore Government-House. Such contamination could not have been borne. True, Butterworth himself was the son of a shopkeeper; but, by entry into the "*closed service*," an immaculate virtue had been acquired, which expunged all odour of "*low caste*" or ungentle concomitants. Wonderful are the incongruities of human nature! I well recollect buying a sixpenny book from the aproned brother of one of the great Butterworth's darling military friends!

As is the case with all despotic potentates, Butterworth was fond of sumptuous engineering works, which he erected for the same useful ends as the pyramid of Cheops, and by this he satisfied three purposes.

1st. He got a lucrative appointment created for his brother-in-law.⁵

2nd. This was a handsome man in gorgeous regimentals, so he added not a little to a mean military staff.

3rd. He got his name written on metal tablets

numerously ordered from Porto Novo, to fix against all his brother-in-law's erections.

Thus the Ellenborough market rose out of the swamps in lonely greatness, to record a friendship deemed by Butterworth illustrious. There it may yet be standing, with its *hogged* back, and its two ends, bowing to the ground as if in respect to its founder, and bearing abundant testimony to the brother-in-law's engineering skill; but often were inquiries made as to its probable use. Next rose the Butterworth ghaut, a curious invention of stucco Ionic pillars, which, when complete, led the witty little editor of the *Straits Times* to compare them to drunken policemen supporting each other from falling. Then rose—or rather sank—the *pons asinorum*, at the Rochor, a cause of fear and trembling to the Acheen ponies, and many sighs from Treasurer Church.

Governor Butterworth sat daily in state to receive the adulations of great strangers, passing to and fro, from all corners of the earth. I think I see the superfine blue surtout, so uncomfortable to wear, yet borne, for the sake of example to the governed; and well do I recollect the high pomp and circumstance that ravished the visitor's sight as he approached the portals of the Governor's office! These were guarded by sumptuously clothed Indians, bearing silver clubs, on whose tops were savage lions' heads. With all his forced dignity, it must be admitted that Butterworth had not the refined perception of

the true gentleman. Thus he was occasionally deceived in the position of his callers. One day, a stout person, dressed in full black, having a massive pinchbeck chain hanging to his waistcoat pocket, presented himself at the Governor's office door. His card was delivered by the piada (footman); it was a foreign one, and he was instantly admitted. The foreigner's portly appearance commanded at once Butterworth's most profound respect; there seemed to be an intuitive attraction between equals. Butterworth rose from his seat and clasped the stranger's hands, leading him at the same time to the seat of honour. The foreigner seemed nobly condescending, he possessed a charming and amiable humility, which appeared to the Governor the beau ideal of greatness. The stranger's accent was interestingly foreign, and nothing less than a German prince, or at least a baron, suggested itself.

Butterworth was all smiles and courtesy, and, with due attention to the foreigner's words, he waited the development of the distinguished man's mission. At length, "Sar," said he, "I am de great magician vot trabels all ober de varld to make trick dat surprise de peoples, and I keep two girls dat do dance on de tightrope, and all de young men be fond to see!" At this announcement Butterworth raised his eyebrows and dilated his eyes with an expression of horror mingled with surprise, and shuddered involuntarily. The magician, continuing, came to the object of his mission—the Gover-

nor's patronage. But the interview was now serious. Butterworth gave a gasp; the magician ran for water, and the piadas rushed in. The poor magician was instantly laid hold of and pushed out of the office.

I presume caste institutions do not exist in Germany as they did amongst the Hindooised English officials. The foreigner had ventured near the great man in ignorance of Anglo-Indian official routine.

Butterworth, like all pompous men of plebeian origin, was very vain. He had no children, yet wished to belong a while longer to this world. A full-length portrait of himself would perpetuate the image of what had once been powerful in little things, important in small circles. He aspired to have this, and it was to be placed in the town-hall. This was his night and day thought. To this end he latterly gave many dinners, balls, and suppers to her Majesty's subjects; and though I had left the Straits before he departed, I believe that the latter part of his *rule* was very popular by the above means, and that his darling wish was attained.

He is now dead and gone, then *Requiescat in pace!* say I. I have a system to illustrate, and I thought his portrait a characteristic one. The Bengal sepoy was at that time thought to be faithful; the Indian civil servants thought highly of themselves; thus they sat in overweening confidence of their great prestige. Wags, puppets, and

incompetents were, at that time, thought to be good enough for high places, if they only had this essential—a papa or uncle in the Directory. The European mercantile community cared little about local politics, so long as they were not disturbed. They had no permanent interest in the place, they looked only to temporary residence, so they were kept in good humour by trifles. A plum-pudding policy was all that was necessary to apply to them to gain their confidence and good will. Fortunately the subject of my present sketch attended to this material point, and succeeded, in the end, notwithstanding all his failings; the result of a more than ordinary development of vanity and pomposity.

1. Colonel William John Butterworth was Governor of the Straits Settlements from 1843 till 1855.

2. Edmund Blundell succeeded Butterworth as Governor in 1855.

3. Lord Ellenborough was a Governor-General of India (1801-4).

4. Donald Davies in *Old Penang* (1956), p. 41 identifies 'Crab-winch' as W.H.M. Read, a well known and prominent citizen of early Singapore.

5. This was Captain Charles Faber who was appointed Superintending Engineer to Singapore in 1844.

CHAPTER XLIX.

NATIVE BURIAL-GROUNDS.

A FEW days will suffice to convince strangers in Singapore that native burial-grounds are to be met with in all directions. These are generally much neglected, and are overgrown with weeds and scrub, and often are they desecrated by the unsympathising Christian, Mahomedan, or Pagan, as may be. Roads are recklessly carried right through the bones of the original native settlers, and crowded streets now traverse the sacred places where many of the Singapore primeval worthies are laid in their last homes. Such sights were often to be seen of fresh human bones and coffins and humus sticking out of the sand by the roadsides, warning the fair young maiden of Western birth what might be her fate, were she laid in this land of apathy and regardlessness. But the ponies are swift, as her carriage drives past, and there is no time for thought.

The Malays seek out sand ridges or *permatangs* in which to bury their dead. The Chinese look out for round knolls and hill-sides. The Hindoos burn

the bodies, so that nothing may remain of what was a living soul, having passions, wants, anxieties, loves, hatreds, bonds and agreements! When neglect and desecration await the bodies of the dead, may the Hindoo not be right in his disposal of what was and now is not? But let that pass. My business is now with the native burial-grounds, and let us go up to a Malay one first—say at Campang Glam. Here will be seen numerous grave-marks in the shape of small ornamental posts or pegs. These denote the resting-places of the poor, and may sometimes have the year of the demise marked on them, but this is but seldom. After a long search, we may see some Arabic mottoes and sentences carved on these posts, and here is one that attracts attention. What is it? There is a Malay sentence—this is very uncommon. Let us see what is the inscription: "*Fatimah mati pada tarehk sanat, 1218.*" A short epitaph, this, and intelligible to very few Europeans, for it is in Jawi characters. The translation, however, is a simple one, and is to this effect, that "Fatimah died in the year of the Hegira, 1218." And why should Fatimah have this attention given to her remains, that so few others around have obtained? The historian knows not. Fatimah's friends are unknown to him. In the rapid dissolution of Eastern families, they may be scattered over the Archipelago—one a slave here, the other a trader and slave-owner there. But the inscription is so uncommon that we may ponder and

surmise. Might not Fatimah have been a young girl with black sparkling eyes, such as only Malays have, luxuriant glossy black hair, small smooth features, and *putih kuning* (olive) complexion, which accords so well with the climate and temperament of the Far East? It is probable that Fatimah was such, and that an early grave had drawn forth more sentiment than the habitual listlessness of the native generally permits.

Dotted here and there, are the brick enclosures of the more wealthy natives; but even here no inscriptions are to be seen, and so they are scarcely worth a visit, even if your visit do not bring down on you the wrath of some bigoted Mussulman, as an uncircumcised intruder. At the Kramat,¹ on the Johore River, which is said to be the burial-ground of the ancient kings, even there a single name or date is not to be detected amongst the many fantastic headstones which ornament that secluded and revered spot.

The Chinese burial-grounds are very numerous, and cover large areas. The tombs are the objects of great attention of the family. The burial-grounds are under the surveillance of the heads of the clans to whom they respectively belong. Thus their desecration is not so common an event as with the Malay ones. The Chinese burial-grounds increase so fast that Singapore seemed likely to become a vast Chinese cemetery. All Chinese families which can afford it, have large spaces marked off as the

family depository. These are either built with brick or granite, according to means, and the names of those buried are written in black, vermilion, or gold. The burying-grounds of the Chinese are not places to be shunned, but are the sites for picnics and family plays. The last resting-places of the father, mother, sister, and brother, are visited with hilarity, and the feast is spread out that the manes of those gone hence may partake thereof. It is the widow only who indulges in grief; and to listen to the vent of a Chinese widow's grief, would break your heart, it is so loud, so long, and so pitcous! She hangs over the tomb, and bewails her loss in tears and lamentations; and within a few yards may be seen her children, her mother, her brothers, and sisters amusing themselves eating, laughing, talking, in the midst of perfect enjoyment. The scene puzzles the conjectures of the intruding European, whose first impulse is to sympathise with the inconsolable lady, and whose next is to chide the heartless relatives. But this is better left alone, so he turns aside with curious thoughts, and finds, if he had not found it before, that the *habits of a people differ in their genus, and that their manners are inexplicable to those who are not familiar with the language and social economy.* The stranger does not know how much to place to real grief, how much to the rules of decorum and restraints of society; but certain he may be that the actions of that bereaved family are all controlled by the inexorable powers

of fashion and custom. These permeate with their influence all nations, whom they alternately blind, constrain, and even torture. If the indifference displayed by the widow's relatives lead the stranger to suspect that the sounds of her grief are modulated to the dictates of fashion and custom, he will have learnt nothing new. For has not the Preacher exclaimed three thousand years ago, that "*the thing that hath been is that which shall be; and that which is done, is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun*"?

1. A *keramat* is actually a shrine: the royal burial ground of Johore's rulers is situated on the banks of the Johore River near Kota Tinggi. Thomson's painting of this royal burial ground is reproduced in *The Thomson Paintings*.

CHAPTER L.

AN ENGLISH SHIP TAKEN BY CHINESE.

THE English ship "E. Walker" was on her voyage from Hong-Kong to Bombay, and on board of her were thirty or forty Chinese convicts who had been sentenced to be transported from the former place to the latter. As the Chinese felons behaved quietly on the voyage down the China Sea, they won the captain's confidence. The captain seems to have been a good-natured man, so he was kind and indulgent. In order to gain the captain's entire confidence, the Chinese worked at ship's duty, and ingratiated themselves the more by transshipping cargo in the harbour of Singapore. *If the English in India have a weakness more glaring than any other, it is their self-esteem.* The captain's self-esteem led him to believe that the villains had formed a personal love towards him, and he was loud in the praises of his *faithful Chinese convicts*, whom he said he would trust with anything. His friends warned him of the jeopardy in which his indulgence placed the ship, cargo, and passengers; but no good result came of this timely interference.

The ship weighed anchor, and sailed out of Singapore roads with the convicts all safe, and carrying at the same time several English gentlemen as passengers; also one lady. And what was the destination of these Chinese convicts? It was to a penal settlement where they would have to work in irons up to the waist in mud. They knew this, but the poor captain was blind in his trust, and no proper means were taken to secure his dangerous charge.

The ship was only one day out, and at night was lying becalmed off the Carimon Islands, when suddenly the Chinese convicts rose, and in a few minutes murdered the captain and his first and second officers. The Bengalese crew took to the rigging, and remained safe till all was over. The passengers either bolted their cabin-doors, or jumped out of the stern windows. The distracted lady clung to her husband's neck, and they sat trembling awaiting their fate. The clamour was loud, but not long. There happened to be one brave Englishman on board, and that was Mr. Gill, the third officer. He guarded the cabin-door with a cutlass vigorously and alone. Here he fought the whole insurgents, who brought picks, boat-hooks, muskets, and handspikes to bear on the devoted man. He stood firm and fought like a lion, laying several of the Chinese at his feet. But of what avail was one arm? The hero's blood was drawn freely, and at length faintness came over him, and he sank covered

with wounds! Many have died in more noble spheres, but few more worthily.

The ship was now gained by the insurgents. They posted parties in all parts to guard themselves from surprise, and awaited dawn. An acquaintance of my own, then a young lad, was one of the passengers, and was one of those who leapt out of the cabin windows, and I will now relate his account of the after transactions. Finding himself in the water, and far from shore, he swam back to the ship, and regained the rudder; here, immersed in the water up to the neck, he held on till morning. He felt that his life was hanging by a hair, and he held to that hair. When it was dawn, finding all was quiet on board, and it being a dead calm, he swam round to the gangway ladder, and begged for his life. This was granted him, and he was hauled on deck by his Chinese masters. Half dead with cold and terror, he was carried to the poop, where one other passenger, and the Manilla steersman, were held under guard by the Chinese, armed with the ship's pikes and muskets. These were the sole Christian survivors excepting the lady, of whom nothing was known at that time. Being now slightly reassured, my informant saw that the blood was being washed off the decks, the bodies thrown overboard, and *the Bengalee Lascars were now obeying, with the utmost servility and respect, their new Chinese masters.* Easy transition!

The Chinese now had time to consider their pre-

dicament. Being still in the track of steam-vessels, their anxiety seemed to be to get away. But none knew the direction of China further than that it lay north-east, and that Singapore Straits were between them and their country. Who was to steer them the course? There were yet two white men on board, and, as a matter of course, the Chinese thought that they must be navigators; so proceeding to the captain's cabin they brought up his best suit of clothes, and, pointing to the compass and China alternately, they signed to the whites their desire to be carried back. They brought the late captain's dress to put on the person who would volunteer to take the ship back to their country. It happened that neither of the whites understood navigation, so they both pleaded ignorance. The Manilla steersman was next appealed to, but without effect, as he was also ignorant of the water, excepting by the Straits of Singapore, and he was not to be thought of.

At length one of the Chinese themselves was elected captain for the day. So he donned the English captain's clothes for that single day, resigning them next morning to another Chinese chosen in his place, and so on. A breeze sprung up by 10 A.M., and the Manilla steersman was ordered to put the ship's head south towards the Straits of Darien. The Lascars, goaded by their fears, energetically trimmed the sails. The European passengers were confined to their cabins, and thus several days and

nights passed. The whites were fed, but treated with distrust. The Chinese occupied the cabin and roundhouse. The Lascars were kept forward. What was to be the upshot no one could tell, but it was surmised that, on the coast of China being reached, all would be murdered, and that the ship would be scuttled. Hope flickered, and the heart palpitated. The end came sooner than was expected; for during the forenoon, in fine weather, a shock was felt that made every one in the ship leap. She had grounded on a shoal, she then began to leak, filled with water, and so stuck immovably fast. Land was about a league off, and the smoke showed it was inhabited; the boats were launched, and the Chinese made for the shore. On their landing they encountered Malays; and the Malay chief, having suspicion that all was not right, surrounded the Chinese, and secured them. He next sent his retainers off to the vessel, and brought on shore the European passengers and crew, and with the rest the lady.

The land turned out to be a group of islands called the Natunas, distant two days' sail east from Singapore. The shipwrecked were taken to the house of the chief and hospitably entertained, while a boat was despatched with intelligence of the wreck and capture to the authorities at Singapore.

My old friend Captain Congalton was sent with his steamer to the relief of the passengers and crew, and also to take charge of the escaped convicts. It was

a mission on which his true British heart found genial scope. His thorough knowledge of the Malays enabled him to open correspondence of the most friendly nature with the islanders. His hospitality charmed and revived the spirits of the shipwrecked. As for the Chinese convicts, he put them in irons, and stowed them safely in his coal bunkers.

Captain Congalton, as a gallant man and a bachelor, was solicitous about the treatment of the lady, but nothing transpired. Her husband spoke not a word on the subject, and the other surviving passenger knew nothing. Enough that she survived with her husband, and returned safely and happily to Singapore. The wife and female household of the Malay chief were assiduous and untiring in their attentions to the white lady. She was a phenomenon to them; they had never seen one before, and regarded her with admiration and curiosity. The chief's wife was loud in her praises of her lady guest's beauty, amiability, and pleasing manners. These, in an English lady, always *draw the sympathy and affection of the untutored denizens of barbaric regions.* The chief's wife minutely related to the gallant captain all the distresses and anxieties of her fair charge. Delicacy (a qualification better known in the civilized world) did not forbid her to open her whole thoughts to my friend, and she proceeded, in accents of commiseration, to detail the state of the poor lady

when brought from the sinking vessel. "*Tuan Capitan,*" said she, "*hati karam de lihat.*" (My heart sank at the sight.)

To proceed, the Chinese convicts were duly landed in Singapore, and lodged in jail. They were tried at the Supreme Court for piracy and murder; but owing to a hot-headed judge having impatiently summed up to an unintelligent petty jury, the prisoners were brought in—contrary to plain evidence—Not Guilty. Thus they escaped the heavier punishment, and were transported to Bombay on their original Hong-Kong sentences. I watched the proceedings with interest, and with others felt considerable disgust at the termination of this strange and romantic adventure. One consideration had no doubt great weight with many who gave the subject their mature inquiry—viz., that *no blood was spilt by the Chinese when once the heat of the fray was over.*

CHAPTER LI.

AN ENGLISH SHIP TAKEN BY MALAYS.

THE conduct of the Malay chief of the Natunas was thought by the English Government to be as praiseworthy as it was unexpected, that they did not know how to make enough of him. He was presented with such valuable presents, and treated with such consideration, as to draw the notice of his own Malay sovereign's attention. This attention was anything but favourable towards the vassal. He was mulcted heavily, and degraded for having presumed to correspond directly with the English. Thus the old Orkney adage was fulfilled, "*Trouble comes of the shipwrecked.*"

While dwelling on the bright example of this Malay chief, it is with sorrow that I now turn to an instance of Malay ferocity. The conduct of the Chinese convicts was humane beside that now about to be related.

It was whispered about that an English vessel had been cut off in the Straits of Malacca, but this was surmise only. The truth at length came to

light through a letter from the Rajah of Perak to the English authorities of Penang, which bore information to the effect, that he had seized certain Malays who had arrived in his country in an English boat, and who at first could give no satisfactory account of themselves. They allowed that they had belonged to an English ship, which was burnt at sea. They had property with them evidently belonging to Europeans, which excited suspicion; so they were seized on suspicion, and the whole affair then oozed out. A Malay cannot keep a secret from a Malay, nor can they trust each other when several are concerned in a plot.

The mystery in all its details was soon in circulation, and I give it as I heard it related by natives as well as by the press. The barque "Fawn," commanded and officered by Englishmen, and manned by Malays, sailed from Singapore by the Straits of Malacca. The Englishmen appeared neither to understand the language nor the habits of the Malays, so it was not to be wondered at that a misunderstanding should arise. There were two English ladies on board, the captain's wife and her sister. At the time of the tragedy the vessel was off the coast of Perak, and the first exciting cause was a trifling one—viz., the smoking of a cheroot. From what small things do great arise! The head Malay, or tindal, as he is called, was smoking a cheroot in the fore-hatchway, where he ought not to have done so; and this act being seen by the chief

officer, a rope's end was applied across his bare back by way of making *blacky* understand in absence of the possibility of oral communication. Now, had a Malay done this to an English sailor, Jack would have up fist, and out with it at the moment; not so with the Malay. The tindal, casting his cheroot aside, stood as mute as a statue. The chief officer, unconscious of danger, walked back to the poop; and little did he suspect what turmoil was in the heart of that motionless, silent Malay man. The tindal was well known in the Singapore native trade as a smart, active seaman; his character had been unimpeachable; he had always been obedient to his commanders; how then could ill have been anticipated of him? Had the stroke been in private I believe no ill would have come of it; but it had been given in presence of all his men. The insult stank in his very nostrils: it burned up his heart, and extinguished all humanity there. In its place a demon, cruel and bloody, took possession, as the sequel will show. The crew had seen the insult—few words passed that evening, for mischief was brewing. No skill or artifice was necessary to take possession of the ship, as the three Englishmen were unsuspecting of the mischief contemplated.

In the silent watches of the night, the officer in charge of the watch was struck down from behind and stabbed till he was dead. In the same instant the captain and the other officer, hearing a scuffle, leaped out of their berths only to receive the same

fate, a grateful death to what was awaiting the two innocent ladies. The captain's wife had incurred the dislike of the Malay crew owing to her innocently having exacted certain cabin drudgery that no Mahomedans will undertake for Christians. In their demoniac spirit, the poor lady now in their power was the object of their cowardly Satanic revenge; not the smallest atom of humanity seems to have been left in their licentious bosoms. The morose copper-coloured crew, whose spirit was little understood by the poor ladies, had been transformed into hellish fiends, susceptible of neither pity nor remorse.

In their cabins they remained, the only slight refuge from the murderers of their protectors. Their little hearts palpitated with terror and the most excruciating agony. The young delicate ladies, the daughters of a happy, innocent, and secure English home, where love reigned triumphant, and where they tripped about the peaceful green lanes, far from all evil, now trembled from heart to knee in the agony of despair. The dreadful act—the murder of the captain—being accomplished, the crew rushed down to the cabin, yelling and howling fearfully.

Half dead even now, the ladies were carried on deck and laid beside the weltering bodies of the husband, brother-in-law, and officer. Here the demons discriminated in the extent of revenge they were about to exact from their weak innocent victims.

They lowered a boat, and throwing the dead bodies of the Englishmen into it, fastened them to the thwarts. They then loaded the boat with kentalge. This done, they bound the young lady hand and foot and lowered her down beside her dead companions. The worst cannot be related. The body of the virtuous English wife they lowered also down into the boat. They did not bind her, because she was already dead! So much of the drama having been enacted, the Malays now scuttled the boat, and the waters closed over the living body of one of England's fair daughters and the corpses of her fellow-voyagers. The other boats were now lowered and the ship set fire to.

The enactors of this horrid tragedy were duly brought to justice before the Recorder's Court at Penang. The leader denied not the charges and pleaded no justification. He said that death was his desert, and he was prepared to suffer it. He added that he had *kena malu* (met an insult) before his mates, and it was for them he died; it was on their account that the English were murdered. He and the ringleaders were led to the gallows, and, as far as they could in this world, expiated a crime the most villanous and diabolical of which human nature is capable.

The Malay, beyond all other nations, has a character for treachery and bloodthirstiness. His secret heartstrings are but little understood amongst the common run of Englishmen. The above tale

is an exposition of a common course of acts that are termed "treacherous." The Malay is high-spirited and careless of life, but he lacks effervescent energy. *These attributes make him dangerous to ignorant and thoughtless Europeans, for when insulted, in the manner above stated, he becomes mad with internal passion.* Whereas in the hands of men who know his temper and nature, and who judiciously comport themselves, even to strictness, he is pliant, obedient, faithful, if not affectionate.

CHAPTER LII.

MALAY MUTINY SUPPRESSED.

AN English vessel under the command of a Captain Latta, sailed out of Singapore with a dozen or so of Malay recruits, bound for Ceylon to join the rifle corps there. The voyage proceeded prosperously till the Straits of Malacca were about to be left. The recruits were young men who had enlisted at Singapore from various tribes of Malays frequenting that emporium. The enlistment there was carried on by an English lieutenant and small native recruiting party, born and bred in Ceylon. What arts may have been used to induce the restraint-hating Malay to join such a monotonous service I do not pretend to tell; but certain it is, as this small party got to sea, they turned their forlorn looks to the wooded shores of Malacca, where they had been accustomed to gather the *tampui* and *kale-dang* fruit from the tall forest trees. There they roamed in savage liberty, which kind of life was dear to them, and the more so as now they found themselves unexpectedly in the iron grip of a

Malayo-Cingalese sergeant, with whom they had no sympathetic ties. They looked with longing eyes at the receding shores ; a frenzy of regret overcame them at the thought that they would never see them more. They found that they had sold themselves to strangers, and a death struggle must be made to regain their homes and their liberty.

When a Malay intends mischief, he is silent ; and these brooded over their sad destiny in secret. They were young men, so had not skill in conspiracy. The sun went down, and the night watch was set. The captain had retired to rest ; but, in this case, due vigilance was observed. Suddenly the young recruits sprang simultaneously on the officers and crew. They knocked down some, and overpowered others ; but were held in check till the captain and officers were called up. A native called Saiboo, well known to me, was one of the passengers, who, like all sensible natives, kept out of the way till one or other party was victorious. It is from his narrations that I relate what followed. The captain was a brave man, and, being armed, he with his officers soon beat back or shot down the Malays, and drove them down into the fore hatch.

From hence they were called up, one by one, and well pinioned. This done, the captain put in for Penang to deliver the mutineers over to the authorities.

Calm and light winds protracted the ship's progress for three days, and, in the meantime, the

Malays were kept pinioned with the most unswerving determination. Long and loud was their wailing ; many were their protestations of repentance, and deplorable were their prayers for mercy : but these were not listened to. Their bonds were cutting into their very flesh, and their agonies were excruciating, but not a particle of mercy was vouchsafed to them. Their piteous cries abated not a jot of the captain's unrelenting severity.

At length they were landed at the jetty in Penang ; but, on being delivered over to the authorities, it was found that the prisoners had living bodies but dead limbs. Their bonds had stopped the circulation of blood, and mortification had long set in. Their lives could only be saved by amputation. Such was the terrible remedy—such the fate of the Malay mutineers. Several of them were to be seen, for years, with no hands to eat with,—no feet to carry them.

The captain was arrested and tried before the Recorder's Court for his cruelty ; but he was acquitted by a jury of his countrymen, who, in the first place, could not but admire his bravery and promptitude in saving his ship, passengers, and crew, whose fate would have been death by the kris. The jury also admitted the plea of want of knowledge of the danger of binding the limbs, in warm climates, where mortification and decomposition set in so rapidly—a fact likely to be overlooked by a native of the temperate zone. Public opinion,

at first, condemned the captain; but the quiet and orderly proceedings of an English court saved him. It is difficult to say that the judgment was not a correct one, when we recur to the tragedy of the "Fawn," though, in point of time, this occurred long subsequent to the trial of Captain Latta.

CHAPTER LIII.

A BLACK MAN MADE WHITE.

DURING the *rule* of Governor Butterworth, he endeavoured to enlist the native independent princes against the slave-trade,—a trade which has been ever active, from time immemorial till now, over the whole Malayan archipelago. The Governor's endeavours culminated in a great achievement, viz., *that of making a black man white*. So extraordinary an event cannot be left out of a full and true history of the times.

The Rajah of Pahang, like a true Mussulman, considered slavery a necessary and comfortable institution, well suited to his own and his country's domestic habits and social economy. While he held these views, he, at the same time, was anxious to defer, if not to minister to the strange prejudices on this subject entertained by his powerful white friend, the governor of the *Tiga boah negri* (the three settlements). An opportunity soon occurred for his making a great name; for there was a boy belonging to some stranger Bugist, whose skin was

so white that he would pass muster as being of European origin. He had been brought from the negro land of New Guinea, where, no doubt, his own parents sold him into slavery, as a prodigy of no utility to them. But it was an easy matter to concoct another story—viz., that the lad had been stolen from his nursery-maid, on the coast of Java, by the Illanoons. This suggested the heartrending idea that there might be Dutch parents in Java yet bewailing the loss of their child. True, his eyes were as short-sighted, red, and hateful of daylight as an albino's; and his large-jointed, lanky fingers, his small forehead, his curly, crisp hair, his scaly skin, and his prognathous jaws, were in exact keeping with the conformation of the true negro; yet the tale was so good a one, and the time so opportune, to make favour with the credulous governor, that it must be hazarded. So a letter was dispatched to the Straits Government, promising hearty co-operation in the great scheme for the extinction of slavery, and forwarding, as a token of real earnestness, the account of a poor white boy that had been taken from some traders, and now waiting the disposal of the English authorities.

The Governor was delighted with the success of his influence in quarters hitherto considered incorrigible. The finding of a white boy was also a master stroke of fortune, which would form the important subject of a report several quires in length to the Supreme Government of India. Perhaps a

knighthood might yet be in store for the illustrious name of Butterworth. The steamer "Hooghly" was dispatched at once to Pahang with orders to accept the white boy, and to use him with all due care and tenderness. The Bindahara of Pahang had been just in his surmises. An important hit in policy had been made; and now the poor, miserable, neglected, ragged, Papuan albino, was sought out of the bazaar, and handed over to the bluff captain of the "Hooghly," whose business, of course, was to *act*, and not to *think*!

The "Hooghly" hove anchor, and returned with her precious freight to Singapore. The boy was carried round all the public offices, to be stared at by the wondering officials. Old Burrows shook his head, but wisely said nothing; and Willans was as prudent in this case as in all others. The great Butterworth said: "Here, Church, is a living example to posterity of the benevolence of my rule, in that poor, degraded, filthy boy, snatched from the ruthless pirates, whom my Government will never now tolerate for a moment. Now we have got him, we must provide for him, as becomes his caste (for Butterworth's long residence in India had made him half a Hindoo). I will in the meantime write to my friend, the Governor-General of Netherlands India, to search out his parents, and what shall we do with him in the meantime? The Indian navy wants engineers—let us make him one."

It is needless to say that no parents were found

to own to the loss, so the boy was retained as an apprentice in the engineer's department of the Indian navy. I watched his progress for several years ; but, even then, his hands could neither hold a file nor a pin ; and he could never be made to comprehend either reading or writing. His future fate I do not know.

He being a Papuan albino, I was interested in watching his ideas, motives, and actions, in his sudden translation to the ruling class. For a negro to find himself suddenly an European was an uncommon circumstance, and well deserved attention. He was elated beyond measure, when his ragged native costume was taken from him, and snow-white shirt, trowsers, waistcoat, and jacket fitted upon him, with cap and shoes complete. He strutted about the room examining each button, opening and closing them, to the great merriment of himself and the bystanders. He then stretched out his arms and legs, amusing himself in every possible manner. Truly he had found himself a new man. Said he : " They called me a black man yesterday, but I am a white man to-day. I am one of the white race that own the big ships with the big guns that the Malays are so terrified for. A Malay man must now get out of my way when I walk along the street." Then he would march up and down the room, wabbling most uncouthly in his tights, in which he seemed most uncomfortably fixed. He next darted down stairs and ran into the streets, strutting and swaggering

like a true Briton. No longer did he bend and cower like the poor denizen of the torrid zone. The poor man of the *Arabian Nights' Tales*, who woke one morning and found himself to be a king, could not have been more extravagantly happy than was the black man who was thus made white.

CHAPTER LIV.

WHAMPOA.

TAU AH KEE,¹ or as he is known by Europeans under the name of Whampoa, is a fit subject of notice before I bid good-bye to Singapore. He was a Chinese of Canton; and, when I first knew him, he was a young, smart Chinese boy, assisting his father in a large shop in China town, Singapore. Whampoa's trade was in supplying the shipping with beef, bread, and vegetables, and, after a few years of perseverance, he became a first-rate merchant and store-keeper.

But as I always hated trade and detested the musty odour of a *godown* (warehouse), I need not speak of Whampoa's concomitants; I will speak of him as I knew him in the character of a friend and a gentleman. I was acquainted with Whampoa for years before we became intimate. My first intimacy commenced when I was asked, along with other friends, to his orange garden at Toah Pyoh.² Here a neglected garden which Whampoa had bought, he soon converted into a tasteful *bel-retiro*, with its

avenues, fruit orchard, hanging gardens, Dutch walks, dwarf bamboos, and orange trees—its shrubs, stags, and peacocks—its aviary and menagerie, all of which displayed fine taste, a healthy, robust love of the beautiful in nature, and of the artificial curiosities of horticulture. Whampoa's mind was that of a country gentleman of the old school,—one whom a Vandyke, a Poussin, or a Gainsborough would have loved, admired, and sympathised with in his pursuits. But these rural and horticultural tastes were not the only accomplishments of Whampoa. His business had brought him much in contact with European gentlemen, and especially with officers of Her Majesty's navy. A night or two at Whampoa's country-house was a treat to a purser of a three-decker, or even to an admiral. And Whampoa's hospitality knew no bounds, for the many years that I had the pleasure of his acquaintance. From constant contact with the officers of the navy, and masters of the mercantile service, he had acquired an English sailor's habits of thought and style of conversation. These, at times, though manly and jolly, were more bluff than polished. But what of that? The heart was sound and the intentions generous. Many a happy party I have met at Whampoa's hospitable table, at both of his country-houses. The company was generally European, Chinese friends were occasional, nor did I ever meet more joyous company, more truly pleasant entertainment.

The table was laid in the most approved European fashion—crockery, silver, glass, viands and wines. A sprinkling of the navy, with a modicum of the mercantile, always tended to make conversation spirited, intellectual, and interesting; and when the champagne had moved round, the song and the laugh resounded in the hall, and such jolly songs and such hearty laughs! Now Whampoia was in his glory. He was a moderate man, and drank sparingly, but he caught the infection, and joined in the fun. His turn for a song came. Here was a poser. His company did not know Chinese, and he did not know an English song. "It's all very fine for you to ask me to sing; but I know you will laugh at me." He is still pressed, and his good-nature overcomes his modesty. He performs a Chinese ditty. I shall not say he sings one, for that would not convey the idea to the English reader. It would, in fact, be unhandsome of me to compare Whampoia's song to anything. I have no doubt it was a very good song—in Chinese. To his English guests the notes sounded discordant, shrill, and grotesque. Those amongst the company who were not habituated to Chinese music, had their risible nerves affected to such a degree that their situation was painful indeed. If a hearty burst of laughter broke out, Whampoia was not the man to take umbrage. He had seen too much of the world not to understand *that every nation has its customs, every people its peculiar notions.*

Whampoa visited his European friends, and I had great pleasure in entertaining him sometimes. I was fond of painting, and Whampoa, looking round the dining-room covered with oil paintings, would exclaim, "Oh, Mr. —, I wish I could *scratch* as well as you." He spoke English fluently, yet he had not that critical knowledge of the language as to enable him to distinguish between words nearly alike, such as the difference between *scratch* and *sketch*. I used frequently to joke him about this. His father was about to leave for China; and Whampoa, with that filial love for which the Chinese are distinguished, asked me, saying—"Oh, Mr. —, do make a *scratch* of my father's face before he goes, so that I may hang it up in my hall."

"I will," replied I, laughing, "*scratch* his face for him—"

"Come, come," said he, "no gammon; do it like a good fellow."

I need not say that I complied with the desire of so dutiful a son, and I had the pleasure to see the painting preserved with honourable care and attachment.

Reader, I am writing about a Chinaman—a man who wore a long plaited tail hanging down from the crown of his shaven head; who dressed in loose silk or cotton garments, and wore thick-soled shoes. The caricature of such a man may be seen on any of your tea-cups or soup dishes, and China caddies.

Once you knew him, you would easily perceive that he was a man *whose actions, motives, loves, joys, and griefs were all hinged on the same great principles as your own.* There was not a whit of difference. The first of Christian principles—that all are equal in the sight of our Maker — was conspicuously proved. I may add that, so far as I was acquainted with Whampoa, he was a man of upright conduct, whether in business or private life. I believe that he is still living, and if so, I hope that he still remembers the friend who *scratched* his father's face.

1. Tan Ah Kee is properly Hoo Ah Kay, who was born at Whampoa near Canton, China, hence his nickname.

2. i.e. Toa Payoh, off Serangoon Road.

CHAPTER LV

MALACCA ONCE MORE.

MALACCA, famed in Malayan and Portuguese annals, has fallen from its high estate, and degenerated into the China baba's Brighton. Here the rich Chinese merchants of Singapore resort for pleasure and recreation; here they *makan angin* (inhale the air), and benefit by the change, from the close office and store, to the freedom of an idle town, in the same way as do the manufacturers of Manchester or the merchants of Liverpool seek renovated health in the idle towns of Scarborough, Buxton, or Beaumaris.

Malacca will repay a visit, for it has a history and reminiscences of the past. The monuments of Malayan empire are gone. There is not a vestige, excepting in the name, to recall the deeds of Sultan Mansur Shah; but of the succeeding rulers of Malacca—viz., the Portuguese—a noble ruin stands on St. Paul's Mount, and there its grey-worn walls recall to memory the heroism of an Albuquerque and the devotion of a Francis Xavier. The ruin

now presents a perfect museum of old worthies as recorded on their tombs, the most remarkable of which is an old flat stone covering the grave of the second bishop of Japan, dated 1541.² A reminiscence of what once was, but is not now—a Pagan empire on the verge of Christianity. Here, alongside of the ancient bishop, are the bodies of the magnates of the succeeding government—viz., that of the Dutch. Here lie the upper coopmen, or chief merchants. Here also lie the bodies of the landed aristocracy, whose names have become household words in Malacca, and whose descendants yet bear their crests, perchance not their virtues.

There is more in Malacca than one at first sight would imagine. It is an aviary full of the most beautiful birds. Birds of the most magnificent plumage are found in its forests. It is a garden full of the most luscious and rare fruit-trees. Gardens and groves extend in all directions; and each fruit, in its due season, delights the palate. Its sea is like a piscatorium full of the most delicate fishes. Its soil is full of the valuable tin ore: in its mountains are gold, and in its forests are gums, drugs, and dyes.

But all this is nothing compared with the *men* of Malacca. Here is an ethnographical puzzle which would pose a Pritchard, a Bunsen, and which, no doubt, *has* puzzled a Crawford. Here the Hindoo features are most remarkably apparent in that Chinese, with shaven head and long tail; there that

coal-black woolly-headed personage calls himself a Portuguese; and yonder fair, flaxen-haired, blue-eyed youth says he is a Malay. Again, that yellow-skinned, oblique-eyed, flat-faced, snub-nosed gentleman says he is a Dutchman. The climate of Malacca is a surprising one in creating such incongruities. In two generations an Englishman becomes a Negro, a Chinaman a Chitty, a Malay becomes a Brahmin, and a round lusty German changes into a dried-up leather-jawed Arab.

The languages are soon forgotten, and all merge into the universal Malay. Not to say that broken-Dutch-English-and-Portuguese are not used; but these are enunciated in the Malay idiom, so that they are so disguised as not to be understood excepting by true-born Malacca men.

But the most amiable part of the Malacca man has not been mentioned; this consists in his absence of religious prejudice. The Buddhist, Brahmin, Catholic, Protestant, and Mahomedan, each assist at each other's festivals, and join with ardour in the ceremonies. A cursory glance would convince the looker-on that indeed men were all of one mind here, and that the coming event was about to arrive. How could it be otherwise? Though Malacca has its representatives of all nations in the world, yet they are so mixed up with each other, that toleration on the broadest basis alone would secure the peace of society. The proud East India Company's civilian is a blood relation of the babas,

inches, tombies, heers, and si-anoos. He sits on the very pillar of state, he is truly the Corinthian capital, resting on a parti-coloured shaft and basement, glorious to behold, even though the shaft be not thoroughly cemented, and the basement may be held together with mud.

I have said that Malacca is the China baba's Brighton—it is his Elysium on earth, for here he rolls in the lap of luxury, here he luxuriates in pleasurable excitements suited to his tastes and instincts. The Portuguese band is engaged for boating excursions and pic-nic parties. The drum beats merrily, and the fife sounds cheerily. The balls and suppers of English watering-places are unknown here: the Chinaman loves to keep all the delights of female society to himself. However tolerant he may be to the outside world in other matters, in this he is as weak and jealous as a lascivious mind and lewd tendency can make him.

A few miles distant from Malacca are the Water Islands, a great place of resort for the Malays on the occasion of the Mahomedan feast of the goat. To this island, which is covered with wood, and which is four miles distant from the shore, thousands of Malays repair from all parts. They come in boats, with their families, and camp on the shore, to feast, make merry, and enjoy themselves in collecting shells and catching fish. Here families make acquaintance, and young men find partners. A constant hum of rejoicing continues for days; what

with musical instruments, singing, drumming, and juggling, the very island seems a living surface. The waters of the Straits being calm as a mill-pond, and the island being well out from the shore, the scene is such as is seldom to be witnessed in other parts of the world. This gathering is a custom peculiar to Malacca people, and deserves notice. I have since heard that a holy man from Mecca has put a stop to the custom, for what reason is best known to himself.

1. i.e., St Paul's Church.

2. A slip by the author who was obviously thinking of the capture of Malacca by Albuquerque in 1511. Buckley in his *Anecdotal History of Old Times in Singapore*, (p. 19) gives the wording on the tombstone, including the date, 1598.

CHAPTER LVI.

SUNGEI BAROO.

ON a certain day I had returned from the interior of Lingei River, and was now anchored off Pangallan Ballah, whose white glistening sands and smooth bay enticed me to land; but my Malay crew described a place far into the country as being well worthy of a visit, so I determined to push on and make the recommended examination. The Pengulu Mukim Kadir Meyden was sought out, and he at once agreed to go along with us, to show the road and point out curiosities. We proceeded for four or five miles through a low scrub—a fit retreat for the snake, the tiger, and the elephant, but we encountered none. I soon found Kadir Meyden to be an agreeable and obliging companion. He was an Indo-Malay, and was very loquacious and minute in his description of Sungei Baroo, and of all the gardens, families, properties, &c. &c., so that we were pretty well acquainted with it before we arrived. The day was a warm one, the vertical rays of the sun beat down on our heads, but a

Chinese paper umbrella, which I always carried over me, enabled me to defy Apollo in all his majesty and greatness. Kadir Meyden was a lean active man, of fifty or fifty-five years of age. I was delighted to see something purely rustic in Malacca territory, and Kadir Meyden was the example. Neither indolence nor voluptuousness was depicted in his features; he had either been rice-planting or gardening all his life.

Having penetrated through the scrub, we came upon a cocoa-nut grove. "Here," said Kadir Meyden, "tuan (you), sir, shall have a drink of the nicest cocoa-nut milk grown in Sungei Baroo. It is as sweet as syrup, and fit beverage for my white friend." On this, with surprising agility, he mounted one of the tallest stems, and pulling off a full bunch, he brought it carefully down with him to the ground. With his billhook he soon pared the husk off the nuts, and making a hole in the end of them, presented me with as agreeable a treat as I ever had. The milk was sweet and deliciously refreshing, after our long walk in the sun; and after having drunk off the milk, we cut the husk in two, and scraped out the soft kernel, which, being young, had not yet hardened. This is not only very palatable, but very nourishing. Having refreshed ourselves, and rested awhile, we now dived into the umbrageous fruit plantations with which Sungei Baroo abounds. Here all Malayan fruit-trees were to be seen in the greatest per-

fection. "There," said Kadir Meyden, "is a sreee vine of such gigantic proportions that it is the sole support of the widow woman who owns it."

Having examined the wonderful vine, we proceeded on our way, and soon emerged into the beautiful valley Sungei Baroo, at this time covered with golden rice-crops, just ready to be cut. The valley was serpentine; and was bounded, on either side, by rich fruit and palm groves. The sun was now descending, and cast its rich and mellow rays over the landscape, burnishing the middle-ground with gold and warm sienna tints, and the distance with purple. The view was most lovely; and I exclaimed, in my enthusiasm, "Truly this realizes the poet's fancy, and excels the painter's imagination!"

"Well," said I, "Kadir Meyden, if there were a spot in the Far East that I could settle down in with happiness and contentment, it would be here. It is a lovely oasis in the wilderness of forest. Nature almost spontaneously provides for your every want. I am sure you must be the happiest man alive, to be a native and a land-owner in this magnificent retreat!"

This allusion to Kadir Meyden's private feelings touched a discordant note.

"Ah, Sir!" said he, "I am *just out of Malacca jail*. I had *ruma tengah, harta banda, bindang dan kuboon* (house, valuables, rice-fields, and plantations); but I mortgaged them to a chitty to pay the expenses of my son's wedding. My sons are

lazy, libidinous, and profligate; my daughters had to be portioned to obtain suitable matches for them; so that, what with one expense and another, added to the usurious *bunga wang* (interest), I have been reduced to poverty; and had it not been for the assistance of Berchy ——, the Dutchman, I should not have had either food or drink. I am a poor, miserable man; and, as to my neighbours, if they be not meddling with each other's wives, they are ham-stringing each other's buffaloes, or smoking opium, gambling, and cheating."

With this practical account of the state of Sungei Baroo as it was, I thought little more of what it appeared to be,—the old adage was exemplified, *that it is not all gold that glitters*. If I moralized that evening, as we returned to the beach, it was on the vanity of human desires, the futility of human wishes.

1. Now spelt Linggi.

CHAPTER LVII.

THE KISSANG.

THE British territory of Malacca is bounded to the south-east by the Kissang river. I think this river worthy of notice, even though of small importance; for on its banks are disclosed, in an eminent degree, all the wild features of a primeval Malayan country. It is entered from the sea over very extensive mud-flats, which are infested with alligators.

It was at three o'clock one morning when I attempted to get into it by means of a small canoe, manned by four Malays. Small as our canoe was, we stuck on the bar; and so afraid were the Malays of the alligators, that they would not venture out of the canoe to push it over, so we had to wait patiently till the tide rose. Once inside the bar, we found the Kissang a dull sluggish river, bounded by mangroves for several miles up. After this, alternate lalang (long grass) plains succeeded tall forests. The forests here abound in elephants and rhinoceroses. Snakes and serpents hang on the

jutting branches of the forest trees, and alligators float in the water. There being very few inhabitants, the beasts of the forest, and reptiles of the waters, have it all to themselves. In the forests the trumpeting of the elephants was frequently heard, and also the rush of the rhinoceros through the tangled branches. The alligators were so tame that we struck them with our paddles before they would condescend to sink to the bottom. This afforded great sport to the Malays, who hate the reptile, and are glad to get a poke at him. We ascended till within a few miles of Gunong Ledang (Mount Ophir), a majestic mountain, towering over the adjacent hills and plains. Here the scenery was magnificent, wild, and rugged. The forest trees, reaching two hundred feet in height, rose out of the foreground, in most fantastic order, and huge creepers and orchideous plants hung to them in graceful festoons. Such scenery as this presented many a study for the admirer of nature.

To those who would search for glimpses of majestic tropical scenery, wild and uncultivated, the Kissang is worthy of attention; and if the visitor be a sportsman, the wild animals of the forest will give him ample scope.

CHAPTER LVIII.

ABDULLA BIN ABDUL KADER MOONSHEE.

THERE was one man of note in Malacca, and he shall be the subject of the present sketch. His proper address is given above; but he was better known amongst the natives as Abdulla Padre—that is, Abdulla of the priests or missionaries. He was a teacher of the Malayan language, by profession; and his name must be long-associated with the first English missionaries to the Far East; for he gave them active assistance, both as their teacher of the language, and as the translator of their printed Scriptures.

He did a rare thing amongst the Malays. He wrote an ample autobiography in the Malayan language; and in it he informs us as follows, which I translate for the benefit of my readers:—

“Now my ancestor was an Arab of the country of Yemen, and by race he was a Yemenite. His name was Abdul Kader, and his profession was that of a teacher of languages and religion. And it came to pass that he left Yemen and came to the

leeward countries (*i. e.* to the East), and settled at the town of Nagore; and having taught the people there for some time in the above subjects, he took to himself a wife. By her he had four sons,—one named Mahomed Abraim, another named Mahomed Deesa, another Noor Mahomed, and the fourth Zain Alabeedin. And it came to pass that he died; and, after he was dead, his sons journeyed to these leeward parts. He that was called Mahomed Abraim came to Malacca; and he took a wife, whose grandson I am. Her name was Perbaji, and she was the daughter of Sheik Meerali. To her was born my father, and to whom they gave the name of Abdul Kader, so as to be named after his grandfather. And the three other brothers went to Java, (of whom) Mahomed Deesa went to Amboyna, where he had wives and children. Noor Mahomed went to the country of Sadayoo, where he had children and grandchildren; and Zain Alabeedin went to Samarang, where he stayed with his children till he died.

“To proceed, my father maintained a respectable position in Malacca, so when he had finished reading the Koran, he studied Tamul and arithmetic; and when he had perfected himself in these, he commenced to trade; taking goods into the interior of Malacca, buying and selling. And he followed this occupation for some time, now trading, at other times teaching the people in the interior in the modes of reading and praying, and such like, also as

to the things pertaining to the religion of Islam. Under such circumstances, he became a great favourite with the people, so they got a wife for him, and besides appointed him preacher in a village called Lobah Kupang. He remained there for some time, and then shifted to Sungei Baroo, being resident there as preacher. Here a son was born to him, called Mahomed Ally, also a daughter named Shereefeh.

“Now my father was learned in Hindee, also in writing and accounts; further, as regards languages, especially the Malay. In this he was apt in writing and composing, also in letter writing to Malay princes. Such was the mode of his making a living at that time. He also taught an English gentleman called Mr. Marsden (the famous Malay scholar) in Malay grammar. And that gentleman gave him a certificate as a proof of this. And I have got this certificate in my father's chest. And I showed it to Missionary Thomson; for at that time I did not know a single word of English, especially the writing. And when Mr. Thomson saw it, he said ‘This is called a “character,” in the English language, given to your father by Mr. Marsden, the same that composed the Malayan dictionary. A token of his having been taught by your father for a period of twenty months in Malacca.’

“Now after this, all my father's relatives in Malacca were very desirous that he should marry in Malacca, and it happened that my father fell into a

dangerous sickness. So the men of Malacca went and fetched him to Malacca. After this he got divorced from his wife of Sungei Baroo, and some time afterwards, on his return to Malacca, they got him married to my mother in Malacca. This was in the year of the Hegira 1200. My mother's race was Hindoo, their native country was Keddah, and when her friends came to Malacca they became Mahomedans. So she was born at Malacca, and her name was Salama."

So much for Abdulla's antecedents. At the time I knew him, he was a man of about fifty years of age. He was a teacher of the Malayan language, and I was his pupil. He was very desirous that I should translate his autobiography into English, but I then had no leisure for such a work.¹ It would have filled two large-sized volumes. Abdulla was tall, spare, energetic, of bronze complexion, oval faced, high-nosed, and cross-eyed. He spoke broken English, but understood it pretty well in general conversation.

He had served in Sir Stamford Raffles' office as a Malay writer, but his principal connection was with the English Protestant missionaries, who were sent out some forty or fifty years ago by the London Missionary Society, and it was interesting to observe the effect of such a connection on his mind. He was a staunch Mahomedan, yet, notwithstanding this, it was clearly perceptible that his opinions had been much modified. He held some of the mis-

sionaries in the highest respect, especially Mr. Milne, of the Anglo-Chinese College at Malacca. Under them, Abdulla *had learnt a freedom of thought and an independent tone not often found in the southern Asiatics.*

We had frequent arguments, religious and metaphysical. Polygamy was evidently a subject shunned by him, not that he did not adhere to the Mohamedan law and practice on this subject, but that it was disapproved of by the missionaries, his employers. *The evils of polygamy were less apparent to him than to the European.* His arguments in support of it, besides the law of the Koran, were much the same as those adduced by Bruce, the Scotch Abyssinian traveller, viz., that women, in the tropics, were old at the age of twenty-five, while the man was young till he was fifty-five. Hence, if a woman and man marry at fifteen, as they generally do in the tropics, nature had ordered just four women for one man. Another argument was, the impossibility of cherishing a woman who might turn out disagreeable, wicked, or quarrelsome. Under circumstances such as the above, it were better to divorce, or get another. He would at the same time state, as I was already aware, that the poorer classes of Mahomedans rarely had more than one wife at a time, but admitted that they were much given to divorce and re-marriage. Further, where there was so much poverty, a quarter of the population only could afford to marry : thus, by allowing a plurality

of wives to the rich, the helpless women were provided for without shame or disgrace to themselves, and thus many were rescued from degradation, loathsome disease, and premature death. To this I would reply that prostitution was as common in Mahomedan countries as in any other, and that unnatural crimes were more so; and even if this were not the case, that his arguments in no way detracted from the high moral tone and standard that is given to society by the example of virtuous husbands and wives remaining faithful to each other till death separated them. Such an example promoted virtue in the children when this was the standard of morals in all families; that a nation made up of such families must be strong in its integrity, faithful to its responsibilities, honourable in its destiny. When we regard the Mahomedan nations of the earth, we must admit that they have rather been strong to overturn and destroy, than to conserve and promote civilization and prosperity. *They had never permanently overcome strong nations, but their sway had been confined to weak and effeminate ones.*

But let that pass, and look to individual families. The father who has several wives and concubines, in what manner can his children look upon him and each other? They must look upon him with disrespect, and on each other with distrust. The sons of different living women are the sons of rivals in affection, so they become the rivals of each other.

A house divided against itself shall be the heritage of the stranger.

The sons cast the imputation of *hawa nafs* (sensuality) on the father that gave them life. The father sees the sons following in his own footsteps, and dare not advise or restrain (this touched poor Abdulla to the quick). Thus, again, the parent is divided from his sons by a great gulf. When he grows old he is lonely in his affluence, and his great anxiety is to build his own tomb, so that his body may not be cast to the dogs. He cannot trust this sad filial office to those that follow him. Abdulla would now be out of all patience, and would get angry, so we would have little more to say to each other that day, but he would come the next day to attack what he was convinced was the weak point of Christianity.

Having settled down to our task, next day, Abdulla would not be long in suggesting that as we argued on polygamy yesterday, we should have a talk over the Trinity to-day. He would continue: "There is no God but one God, is the true faith. This is consistent with reason, for it is a moral impossibility, it is an absurdity, that one can be three, and three one. I buy three ducks in the bazaar, and am told that there is only one duck. Now, master, how do you get over this?"

"Well, Abdulla," I would say, "I do not pretend to be learned in theology, nor is it possible for me to explain all the mysteries of our faith. The very

name of God the Almighty, the Incomprehensible, the Omniscient and Omnipotent, would suggest the profanity of attempting to lay open and explain all the mysteries of our great Creator. Suffice it for me to say, that the Trinity in Unity is a matter of faith in which millions of Christians live and die. The foundation of their belief is in their holy Scriptures. But if this answer does not satisfy, as probably it does not, I again ask you, if you think it necessary to understand everything that you believe? You cannot say that it is; for even the profoundest philosophers could not attain to a knowledge of the origin of the universe. They cannot give you a measure of the smallest fraction of eternity. God is Eternal. Then how could they apply human reason to unfold and explain the Eternal Deity, the great Maker of all? Philosophers do name and classify the component elements of God's works, and examine their relations and qualities. Of their creation, they can know nothing, much less then of their Creator.

"In your autobiography, I see you have made a happy illustration of the knowledge of mankind. It is much akin to another made by the great Dr. Chalmers. He compares man to one looking out from the bottom of a deep well. You have compared him to a frog below a cup, the interior of the cup you call man's range of thought. You have made it to be very limited.

"You say 'seeing is believing,' and that you are

not bound to believe what your eyes do not see, that your hands do not feel, nor that your ears do not hear. Then look at that moon just rising over the sea horizon. You say, that its upper limb is above the horizon?"

"Certainly," said Abdulla, "because I see it, so I believe it, and not otherwise."

"Well," said I, "though I see it, I believe that it is not above the horizon. It only appears to be above the horizon to your sight; but it actually is not. And had you studied the works of God, as displayed in the science of astronomy, you would be of my belief. It is what is called refraction that makes the moon appear to be above the horizon, before it actually is. Then why object to the doctrine of the Trinity, because your mind, and mine, cannot account for it?"

"Well," said Abdulla, "you must not object to my faith either, for I have our holy Scriptures in the Koran for my guide."

"Very good," said I, "Abdulla; then refrain from calling our holy mysteries absurd."

"But," he would add, "you surely do not believe that Jesus could be the Son of God. He was only a man; though we admit that he was the greatest of the prophets. He could surely never be God's equal. Our faith teaches us to call ourselves *hamba Allah* (God's slaves). It would be profanation to say that even Jesus could be anything else in this world."

I replied, "I must give much the same answer as previously. If God made the universe,—if He be the Almighty,—then it follows that all things must be possible with Him, even to His only-begotten Son appearing in the actual man, whose image is of God. We are taught in our holy Scriptures to call God our Father; we are, therefore, His children. You are taught to call yourselves His slaves. Thus our religion must be the better of the two, as it brings us nearer to Him."

Such were our discussions. They may be crude, but the heat of argument and zeal was not the less on either side. Abdulla, though so long under the tuition of Protestant missionaries, and though well acquainted with the New Testament, was never converted; and I have since learned that he died in the faith of the Koran. He seemed to be convinced that it was sufficient for him. Burrows has said that the faith of the Mahomedan is strong. We may revert to the subject again.

I. Abdulla's autobiography. Thomson eventually did translate the autobiography into English (see chapter notes for Chapter XXXVII, p. 206).

THE END.

— 2 APR 1992

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