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**A Voyage To New Guinea, And The Moluccas, From
Balambangan: Including An Account of Magindano,
Sooloo, and other Islands; And Illustrated With Thirty
Copperplates, Performed In The Tartar Galley, ...**

Forrest, Thomas

London, 1779

Chapter XVII. Of the North Part of Borneo - Its Climate - Rivers -
Harbours - Product - People called Idaan - Their Superstition - Farther
Account of Places - Advantage of trading from Indostan ...

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C H A P T E R XVII.

*Of the North Part of Borneo—Its Climate—Rivers—Harbours—Pro-
duct—People called Idaan—Their Superstition—Farther Account of
Places—Advantage of trading from Indostan hither—Account of the
Badjoos and the People of Tedong.*

THE climate puts me in mind of Ceylon, being, from the abun-
dance of woods and verdure, always cool, and not subject to
hot land winds, like the coast of Coromandel; nor to great heats, as
Calcutta in Bengal. The land and sea winds are always cool; not
but that particular circumstances of situation, in all countries, affect
the air, as the neighbourhood of swamps, or the freedom of venti-
lation intercepted by woods.

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Most of this north part of Borneo,* granted to the English East India
Company by the Sooloos, is watered by noble rivers. Those that dis-
charge themselves into Maludo Bay, are not barred: it has also many
commodious harbours, Sandakan, Maludo Bay, Ambong, Pulo Gaya
on the main land, and many good harbours on the islands near it;
two on Malwally; two, if not more, on Banguay, one of them be-
hind the island Patanuan; two on Balambangan; and one behind
Maleangan, near Banguay.

* See Dalrymple's map of Felicia;

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Of the two harbours on Balambangan, called the north-east and south-west, the north east is the larger; but on the south side, where the English settled, the ground is swampy. At the entrance of the S. W. harbour, is great convenience of watering. Fresh water may be conveyed into the lower deck ports of a first rate, lying in five fathom, by means of a hose from a rivulet close by. Here also the soil is rich and fruitful: at the N. E. harbour, it is sandy and barren. Round the island, quantities of fish may be caught.

On the main land of Borneo, opposite Balambangan, and to the island Banguay, grow forests of fine tall timber, without underwood. Freestone may be had in abundance. Here are large cattle called Lifsang: flocks of deer and wild hogs feed on spacious plains, in no fear of the tiger, as on the island Sumatra. The country produces all the tropical fruits in proportion, with many known in few places but Sooloo; such as the madang, like a great custard apple, and the balono, like a large mango. In this north part of Borneo, is the high mountain of Keeneebaloo, near which, and upon the skirts of it, live the people called Oran Idaan or Idahan, and sometimes Maroots. The mountain is, in old maps, named St. Peter's Mount, and is flat atop.

I have conversed with many Sooloos concerning the Idaan, and with many of them who understand Malay. They believe the deity pleased with human victims. An Idaan or Maroot must, for once at least, in his life, have imbrued his hands in a fellow creature's blood; the rich are said to do it often, adorning their houses with skulls and teeth, to show how much they have honoured their author, and laboured to avert his

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his chastisement. Several in low circumstances will club to buy a Bifayan Christian slave, or any one that is to be sold cheap; that all may partake the benefit of the execution. So at Kalagan, on Mindano, as Rajah Moodo informed me, when the god of the mountain gives no brimstone, they sacrifice some old slave, to appease the wrath of the deity. Some also believe, those they kill in this world, are to serve them in the next, as Mr. Dalrymple observes. They are acquainted with a subtle poison called Ippoo, the juice of a tree, in which they dip small darts. These they shoot through a hollow piece of wood, which the Sooloos call sampit; whence is said to issue instant death, to whoever is wounded by them.

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The author of the Origin and Progress of Despotism, a book translated from the French, says, (p. 121.) "Perhaps most nations in the world have originally delighted in this horrible parade of human victims, and this would never have been suffered, if they had not been previously habituated to blood, by the frequent sacrifice of animals. The blasphemous notion, that the deity can delight in blood, being once established, the next blow was to strike the priestly knife into the throats of men, and let loose that purple torrent, which, according to their hellish doctrine, was the most valuable, and the most pleasing in his eyes." He then says, "How blest are we Christians, in the mysterious doctrine, that the blood of Jesus Christ shall prove a sufficient sacrifice for the sins of mankind!"

The Idaan pen hogs, and eat pork. They carry their rice, fruits, &c. to the sea side, and buy salt from the Badjoos, who make it often in this manner. They gather sea weeds, burn them, make a lye of ashes, filter it, and form a bitter kind of salt in square pieces, by

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boiling it in pans made of the bark of the ancebong. These pieces of salt are carried to market, whither both the Idaan and mussulmen resort; and pass as a currency for money.

The places granted to the English, south of Pirate's point, are named Pandassan, Tampassook, Abia, Ambong, Salaman, Tawarran, Inanan, and Patatan, as far as Keemanees. In this extent of coast are two good harbours, Ambong, and behind Pulo Gaya, of which hereafter. This coast is better inhabited than that east of Pirate's point, extending a little beyond the spacious harbour of Sandakan, to Towson Abia, where the grant terminates. The latter is mostly low land, and the inhabitants live up the rivers a good way; whereas, on the former part of the grant, the coast is somewhat higher, and inhabited close to the sea.

The Mahometans live mostly by the sea side, at the mouths of rivers; and preclude, as much as they can, Europeans from having intercourse with the Idaan and Maroots: but, at Balambangan, and on the island Labuan, near Borneo, the Idaan in their boats, brought hogs, fruits, &c. and were glad to see the English eat pork like themselves. The north part of Borneo is said to have been once under the dominion of China.

Mr. Dalrymple, in his plan for settling Balambangan, gives a very particular and just account of this country, which he calls Felicia; and adds, that the Idaan, if well used, would flock from every quarter, to whoever should settle there. This I firmly believe, with that judicious, and inquisitive gentleman. I have seen many of them, not only at Balambangan,

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lambangan, but on the coast of Borneo, and have conversed with several in Malay;—what the same observer says, about their respecting the Mahometans, is also strictly true. They consider the Mahometans as having a religion, which they have not yet got: and I am of opinion, from the moral character which they deserve, not only that his scheme of civilizing them could be carried into effect, but that our religion could be easily introduced among them. The horrid custom already mentioned, paves the way: the transition hinted by the author of the origin of despotism, sufficiently points it out. The Idahan punish murder, theft, and adultery, with death; and take but one wife. Had our settling in this quarter succeeded, in them would have been a vast acquisition of people to furnish us with pepper, and rough materials for exportation, from their many rivers; beside the precious articles of gold and diamonds; and the great benefit a free trade, from Indostan hither, would bring to Bengal and Bombay. A race of Lascars (sailors) might be brought up in it, which would employ many vessels, as the commodities are bulky, that return the salt and calicos of Indostan. These Lascars, mixed with an equal number of English sailors, would fight a ship well; as has been often experienced in India, especially on the coast of Malabar. Another advantage would have attended our settling in this quarter: the quick intercourse with Cochin-China, and other places on the west coast of the China seas. To sail thither, from any place already mentioned, or from Balambangan, and to return, the course being nearly N. W. or S. E. either monsoon is a fair wind upon the beam; and Cochin-China would take off, not only many woollens, but many Indostan cottons, particularly Bengal Mullins; as I learnt from a very intelligent Chinese at Balambangan, who spoke good Malay.

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The Badjoo people, called Oran Badjoo, are a kind of itinerant fishermen, said to come originally from Johore, at the east entrance of the straits of Malacca. They live chiefly in small covered boats, on the coasts of Borneo and Celebes, and adjacent islands. Others dwell close to the sea, on those islands, their houses being raised on posts, a little distance into the sea, always at the mouths of rivers. They are Mahometans.

At Paffir's river's mouth, are many of those Badjoos, who employ themselves chiefly in catching with hand nets, which they push through the mud, small shrimps. These well washed in sea water, they expose to a hot sun. They then beat them in a mortar, into a kind of paste with a strong smell, called blatchong, much in request all over India. The Badjoos of Borneo also make salt.

These last Badjoos may be called fixt or stationary, compared with those who live always in their boats, and who, as the monsoon shifts on the islands Borneo and Celebes, shift, or move always to leeward, for the sake of fine weather, as the Tartars in Asia shift their tents for the sake of enjoying perpetual summer.

In their original country, Johore, where it would seem an old method to live in boats; it is said, that on a certain festival, they crowded in numbers, and made fast their boats, astern of the vessel, in which was their prince; it being their custom at certain seasons to do so: but, a storm arising from the land, they were driven across the southern part of the China sea, to the coast of Borneo; and of this they celebrate the anniversary, by bathing in the sea on an annual day.

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They have a language of their own, but no written character; and many Badjoos are settled on the N. W. coast of Borneo, where they not only fish, but make salt; and trade in small boats along the coast.

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At Macassar live many Badjoos, chiefly on the water in covered boats, and shift their situation with the monsoon, but consider Macassar as their home.

When I went in 1773 from Passir, to visit the little Paternosters that lie mid way between Borneo and Celebes, I found many Badjoo boats, about five or six tons burden; all of them having the tripod mast, and lyre tanjong. Several had women and children on board. They lay at anchor, fishing for swallo, or sea slug, in seven or eight fathom water. They see the swallo in clear water, and strike it as it lies on the ground, with an instrument, consisting of four bearded iron prongs, fixed along an almost cylindrical stone, rather smaller at one end than the other, about eighteen inches long. They always fix an iron shot at the end of the stone, next the point of the irons. They also dive for swallo, the best being got in deep water.

The black swallo is reputed the best; but, I have seen some of a light colour, found only in deep water, which I was assured to be of more value in China than the black; and sold even for forty dollars a pecul. The pieces are much larger than are generally those of the black swallo, some of them weighing half a pound. The white swallo is the worst, easily got in shoal water, and on the dry sand, among coral rocks at low water. Its value is about four or five dollars a pecul.

Those



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Those Badjoos settled on the N. W. coast of Borneo, near rivers mouths, used to supply us at Balambangan, with rice, fowls, and other provisions.

On the N. E. part of Borneo, is a savage piratical people, called Oran Tedong, or Tiroon, who live far up certain rivers. The Sooloos have lately subdued them, by getting the Rajah (or chief) into their power. * These Oran Tedong fit out vessels large and small, and cruise among the Philippine islands, as has been formerly said. † They also cruise from their own country, west to Pirate's point, and down the coast of Borneo, as far as the island Labuan. After an excursion I once made from Balambangan to Patatan, a little beyond the island Pulo Gaya; on my return, I put into a small bay, east of Pirate's point, almost opposite Balambangan. There appeared nine Tedong-pirates, in vessels of small size, about that of London wherries below bridge. Several Badjoo boats being in the bay at the same time, the people laid the boats close to the shore, landed, and clapt on their (Ranty) iron-ring jackets for defence. The pirates kept in a regular line, put about, and stretched off altogether, not choosing to land. Had I been alone in the bay, I might have fallen into their hands.

The Oran Tedong live very hard on their cruises, their provisions sometimes being raw sago flour. They have often no attop or covering; nay, sometimes as the Sooloos have told me, they go, especially if it rains, stark naked. The Moors of Magindano, and the Illanos, also Moors, despise these people. When they meet, however, in roads and harbours among the Philippines, where the common prey is, they do

* See page 335.

† Page 16.



not molest one another. I have been told, that the Oran Tedong will, in certain cases, eat human flesh. If this be true, it can only be like the Battas on Sumatra, in a frantic fit of resentment. That the Battas do so, I am too well assured.

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Their boats are sometimes small, and made of thin planks, sewed together. I have heard of some such, once shut up in a bay by a Spanish cruiser: they took their boats to pieces, and carried them away over land.

The Oran Tedong make a great deal of granulated sago, which they sell to the Sooloos very cheap; perhaps at one dollar a pecul. The Sooloos, as has been said, sell this again to the China Junks.

Before I leave this people, I must mention, with whatever reluctance, one thing said of them, that speaks the barbarity of those who have had no revealed religion, Jewish or Christian, Mahometan or Jentoo. When the Oran Tedong get into their hands many prisoners, to secure themselves, they will lame some of the stoutest; nay leave them, on perhaps a little sandy island, (of which are many in the Sooloo archipelago, and among the Philippines) till they be at leisure to fetch them. Nor do they stick at breaking the limbs of their captives, in cowardly fear of their own. So justly do the Moors despise them for Barbarians.

C H A P.

