

guards them from the encroachment of others. The chief to whom they thus attach themselves, is induced to treat them well, in order to retain their services, and attach them to his person, that he may, in case of need, be enabled to defend himself from depredations, and the violence of his neighbours.

Such is the absence of legal restraint, that all find it necessary to go abroad armed, and accompanied by a trusty set of followers, who are also armed. This is the case both by day and night, and, according to the Datu's account, frequent affrays take place in the open streets, which not unfrequently end in bloodshed.

Caution is never laid aside, the only law that exists being that of force; but the weak contrive to balance the power of the strong by uniting. They have not only contentions and strife among themselves, but it was stated at Manilla that the mountaineers of Sooloo, who are said to be Christians, occasionally make inroads upon them. At Sooloo, however, it did not appear that they were under much apprehension of these attacks. The only fear I heard expressed was by the Sultan, in my interview with him; and the cause of this, as I have already stated, was probably a desire to find an excuse for not affording us facilities to go into the interior. Within twenty years, however, the reigning sultan has been obliged to retire within his forts, in the town of Sooloo, which I have before adverted to.

These people are hostile to the Sooloos of the coast and towns, who take every opportunity to rob them of their cattle and property, for which the mountaineers seek retaliation when they have an opportunity. From the manner in which the Datu spoke of them, they are not much regarded. Through another source I learned that the mountaineers were Papuans, and the original inhabitants of the islands, who pay tribute to the Sultan, and have acknowledged his authority, ever since they were converted to Islamism. Before that time they were considered extremely ferocious, and whenever it was practicable they were destroyed. Others speak of an original race of Dyacks in the interior, but there is one circumstance to satisfy me that there is no confidence to be placed in this account, namely, that the island is not of sufficient extent to accommodate so numerous a population as some ascribe to it.

The forts consist of a double row of piles, filled in with coral blocks. That situated on the east side of the small stream may be said to mount a few guns, but these are altogether inefficient; and in another, on the west side, which is rather a rude embankment than a fort, there are some twelve or fifteen pieces of large calibre; but I doubt very