

sultans and their subjects have become hostile to Europeans, of whom they plunder and destroy as many as they can, and this they have hitherto been allowed to do with impunity.

Although I have described the trade with Sooloo as limited, yet it is capable of greater extension; and had it not been for the piratical habits of the people, the evil report of which has been so widely spread, Sooloo would now have been one of the principal marts of the East. The most fertile parts of Borneo are subject to its authority. There all the richest productions of these Eastern seas grow in immense quantities, but are now left ungarnered in consequence of there being no buyers. The cost of their cultivation would be exceedingly low, and I am disposed to believe that these articles could be produced here at a lower cost than any where else.

Besides the trade with China, there is a very considerable one with Manilla in small articles, and I found one of our countrymen engaged in this traffic, under the Spanish flag. To him I am indebted for much information that his opportunities of observation had given him.

The materials for the history of Sooloo are meagre, and great doubt seems to exist in some periods of it. That which I have been able to gather is as follows.

The island of Sooloo is generally believed to have been originally inhabited by Papuans, some of whom, as I have already stated, are still supposed to inhabit the mountainous part. The first intercourse had with them was by the Chinese, who went there in search of pearls. The Orang Dampuwans were the first of the Malays to form settlements on the islands; but after building towns, and making other improvements, they abandoned the islands, in consequence, it is said, of the inhabitants being a perfidious race, having previously to their departure destroyed as many of the natives as they could.

The fame of the submarine riches of this archipelago reached Banjar, or Borneo, the people of which were induced to resort there, and finding it to equal their expectation, they sent a large colony, and made endeavours to win over the inhabitants, and obtain thereby the possession of their rich isle. In order to confirm the alliance, a female of Banjarmassing, of great beauty, was sent, and married to the principal chief; and from this alliance the sovereigns of Sooloo claim their descent. The treaty of marriage made Sooloo tributary to the Banjarmassing empire.

After the Banjars had thus obtained possession of the archipelago, the trade in its products attracted settlers from the surrounding islands, who soon contrived to displace the aborigines, and drive them to the inaccessible mountains for protection.