

Mangsee Islands, and those of Balambangan and Banguey. We found this channel clear, and all the dangers well defined.

As the principal objects of my visit were to ascertain the disposition and resources of the Sooloos for trade, and to examine the straits leading into the Sooloo seas, in order to facilitate the communication with China, by avoiding on the one hand the eastern route, and on the other the dangers of the Palawan Passage, it may be as well to give the result of the latter inquiry, referring those who may be more particularly interested to the Hydrographical Atlas and Memoir.

The difficulties in the Palawan Passage arising from heavy seas and fresh gales do not exist in the Sooloo Sea, nor are the shoals so numerous or so dangerous. In the place of storms and rough water, smooth seas are found, and for most of the time moderate breezes, which do not subject a vessel to the wear and tear experienced in beating up against a monsoon.

The Straits of Balabac may be easily reached, either from Singapore, or by beating up along the western shore of Borneo. When the straits are reached, a vessel by choosing her time may easily pass through them by daylight, even by beating when the wind is ahead. Once through, the way is clear, with the exception of a few coral lumps; the occasional occurrence of the north wind will enable a vessel to pass directly to the shores of the island of Panay. A fair wind will ordinarily prevail along that island, and, as I have already mentioned, it may be approached closely. The passage through to the eastward of Mindoro Island may be taken in preference to that on the west side through the Mindoro Strait, and thus all the reefs and shoals will be avoided. Thence, the western coast of Luzon will be followed to the north, as in the old route.

I do not think it necessary to point out any particular route through the Sooloo Sea, as vessels must be guided chiefly as the winds blow, but I would generally avoid approaching the Sooloo Islands, as the currents are more rapid, and set rather to the southward. Wherever there is anchorage, it would be advisable to anchor at night, as much time might thus be saved, and a knowledge of the currents or sets of the tides obtained. Perhaps it would be as well to caution those who are venturesome, that it is necessary to keep a good look-out, and those who are timid, that there does not appear to be much danger from the piratical prahus, unless a vessel gets on shore: in that case it will not be long before they will be seen collecting in the horizon in large numbers.

The treaty that I made with the Sultan, if strictly enforced on the first infraction, will soon put an end to all the dangers to be appre-