

From Mr. North we obtained a number of rare Malay and Bugis manuscripts, forming a collection which is said to be the largest now in being, that of Sir Stamford Raffles having been lost. Some of them are beautifully written.

One of the most amusing incidents that occurred during our stay at Singapore, was a visit to a ship of the king of Cochin-China, which we made by express invitation. The whole trade of Cochin-China is a monopoly in the hands of the king who owns the ships, which likewise compose part of his navy. They are built after the European model of some half a century back. The vessel that furnished it belonged to France, and was wrecked on their coast many years ago, after which missionaries and artisans were sent out by Louis XVI., who taught them many of the arts of Europe. The outward form of the old French ship appears to have been pretty well imitated, but the stern is more elaborately carved and ornamented with gilding. The internal arrangements also show a great variation from the model, and in them the notions of the Cochin-Chinese prevail, unmixed with those of Europeans. The two ships were about five hundred tons burden; they are very roughly built, have huge sterns, and exceedingly thick sides. Indeed every thing on board is unsightly, and all the work is of the rudest description, giving no very high idea of the proficiency of the mechanics of Cochin-China.

These vessels have a middle deck, which is pierced for guns. The cabin, into which we were shown, had a josh-temple, and with josh-sticks burning. There were two cabins; that under the poop had small rooms, and was very low between decks. There were no fixtures, but simply a mat to lie on. The binnacle is a bed of sand, in which the compass-box is set for security; and a number of small, coloured sticks were stuck into the sand, which were represented to be markers, by which the way of the vessel was noted. A manuscript chart, which the captain took great pride in exhibiting, was shown us. This was evidently a copy of an English one, but all the names were in Chinese. The crew had a decided Malay look, and were small men; they are in form stout, but are not athletic. There did not appear to be any mixture of races among them. As we passed around the deck, we observed a party of five or six of the men engaged in gambling with cards, in which they were so much engrossed, that they heeded not the command of their officers to desist and make room for us. This vessel was furnished with rattan-cables, which were exceedingly well made. The wheel for steering appeared odd, on account of its small size, and the helmsman sits when he takes his trick. On either side of the deck, just abaft the foremast, there is a cook-house, formed of a