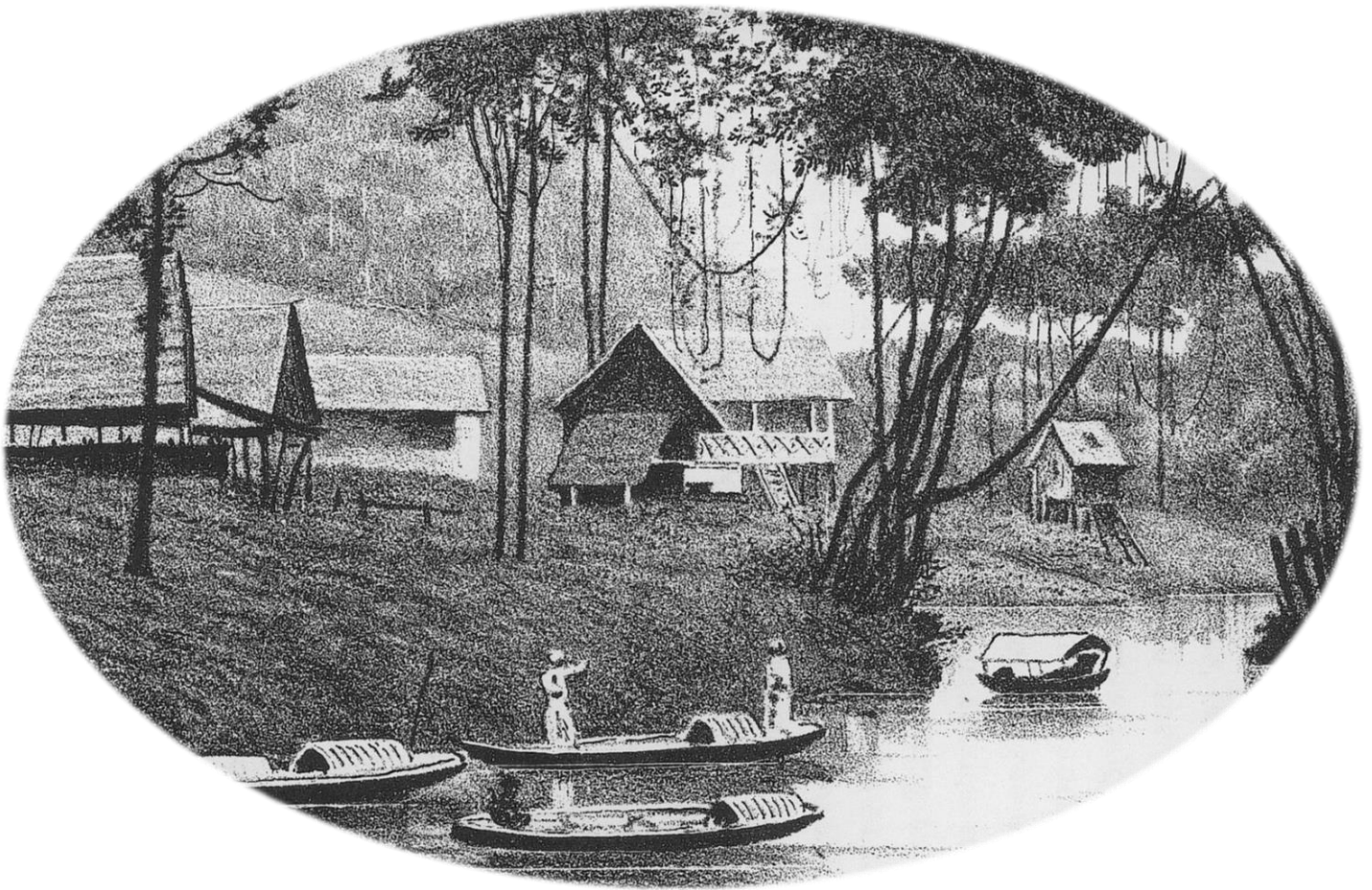


Footnote to Sarawak
[notes on the life of Ludvig Verner Helms]

by
Estelle Gardner
1965



Edited by
Nancy P. Roe, Rebecca P. Roe, & Timothy W. Clapp
2021

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The image on the title page is reproduced from a sketch by L.V. Helms titled "Boats Carrying Quicksilver on the Stoa River" that was originally published in his 1882 *Pioneering in the Far East*.

EDITORS' NOTES

If you are reading this book, you may have either read Ludvig Verner Helms' *Pioneering in the Far East* or you are related to the author or both. Estelle Gardner and Verner W. Clapp were cousins, both grandchildren of Helms. Estelle was the daughter of Dagmar Helms and lived in Dorset, England; Verner, the son of Mary Sybil Helms, lived in Chevy Chase, Maryland, USA. At the time of his death in 1972, Verner was reading over and, at her request, making comments on the 1965 manuscript of this document which Estelle hoped to publish. Nancy Roe, Verner Clapp's daughter and therefore Helms' great-granddaughter, inherited the original manuscript.

In 2019, Nancy, seeing it languishing on a shelf, wished it could be put in a readable form so that other family members could enjoy it. She had the document scanned and sent to her siblings. Becca Roe, Nancy's daughter and Tim Clapp, Nancy's nephew were recruited as editors to put it in a readable and easy to use format.

The manuscript was unfinished and typewritten on onion-skin paper with the occasional handwritten corrections and/or annotations. The editors took the following actions with the original document.

- Applied an OCR (optical character recognition) process to a scanned copy of the original manuscript knowing it would likely introduce errors. This was followed by a careful review of the entire document where we compared the electronic file to the paper copy.
- Preserved the meaning of the original manuscript, yet made it easier to read.
- Corrected obvious typographical errors. Added punctuation to obvious familiar terms (i.e. Mr., St.)
- Verified the spelling of unfamiliar terms (i.e. locations, events, titles.)
- Retained the original footnote style and placement on the page. Adjusted them in places where the electronic MS format caused awkward breaks.
- Maintained the line spacing of the original. Single spacing was used when quoting a primary source.
- Retained the spelling and mechanics of the time when *Pioneering in the Far East* and/or this manuscript were written.
- Made no changes to words spelled using typical British spelling.

- Left alone Ludvig Verner Helms' spelling. According to the author, his spelling was "on the whole good, when it is considered that English was not his mother-tongue" - we were careful, as she was, to leave his words and inventive spellings intact, unless it was an obvious error or would have clearly affected his intended meaning.
- Searched unsuccessfully for illustrations that Miss Gardner wanted to find and include in her book.
- Added a new title page and a comprehensive index of people, places, events, etc.

This book is inextricably tied to Helms' *Pioneering in the Far East*. We recommend you read it first if you want to obtain a full understanding of this manuscript. Estelle Gardner's meticulous research and extensive listing of sources help clear up many questions and provide a fascinating background for the events related by Helms.

Pioneering in the Far East is available in printed form and is free online through the Internet Archive website.

<https://archive.org/details/pioneeringinfar01helmgoog/page/n9/mode/2up>

The three of us worked weekly through the pandemic months on Zoom. It was a good way to take our minds off of the stressful year 2020. It was a way to get different members of our family together working on a family project that we hope many will enjoy.

We continue to be interested in improving and expanding this document. Anyone with access to interesting photographs, letters or documents relating to the content is welcome to contact any of the editors.

Nancy P. Roe, Presque Isle, Maine

Rebecca P. Roe, Tulsa, Oklahoma

Timothy W. Clapp, Colorado Springs, Colorado

Winter/Spring 2021

Footnote to Sarawak

[notes on the life of Ludwig Verner Helms]

by

Estelle Gardner

1965

To: Verner W. Clapp
4 West Irving Street
Chevy Chase, Md.
U.S.A.

FOOTNOTE

to

SARAWAK.

"To the men and women of all races
and nationalities who lived and
worked in Sarawak of the White Rajahs."

Estelle Gardner,
Morcombelake,
Bridport,
Dorset.

FOREWORD

That a footnote to the history of Sarawak under its White Rajahs should begin in Denmark in 1825, and then move in turn to Bali, California, Cambodia and Thailand, before reaching Kuching, may seem at first sight strange, but those interested in the subject will find the name of Ludvig Verner Helms mentioned in most of the books dealing with it, except the very earliest. Appointed first manager of the Borneo Company Ltd., he came to Sarawak in 1852, over four years before that company came into being.

He has been referred to variously by different writers as "the Dane," "an adventurous Dane," "a man of Danish origin," "a capable if somewhat complacent man," and so on, and I have written this book as a biography, and given some particulars of his background, in order to show how and why it was that he came to the country of the White Rajahs in the first place. But the twenty years he spent there are the reason for the writing. For as well as giving interesting details about life in early Brooke Sarawak, in the development of which the Borneo Company played an unique part in an unique adventure, they covered the period of the quarrel between Sir James Brooke, the first White Rajah, and his nephew Captain John Brooke Johnson Brooke, which not only changed the succession to the Raj, but also grievously affected the personal relationships of all those involved in it either directly or indirectly. Since Helms was the servant of the Borneo Company and not of the Sarawak

Government he was able to take a detached and unbiased view of these happenings, and for this reason some of the information he left and the views expressed will be found to run counter to information and views published elsewhere. They also fill in gaps which will be found in all histories of Sarawak.

In 1882 Helms' reminiscences appeared under the title Pioneering in the Far East, and in this book he stated some of these views. It was well reviewed at the time, but had a strange subsequent history, and up to 1955 only one attempt was ever made to use his papers as a source of information. In 1936 the late Captain C.D. Le Gros Clark, who intended writing a book on Sarawak history, approached Helms' third daughter, my mother, for material which was willingly given. The book, if finished, was never published. Then, in 1955, the Borneo Company asked me, as his granddaughter, for information to help with their centenary history The Borneo Story which was published in the following year. At that time I came into possession of my grandfather's papers, some of which were new to me. After studying them I felt that in the interests of historical accuracy and justice the material should be placed on record.

I have given extracts from Helms' letters as he wrote them, except that I have translated those to his mother which were, of course, in Danish. His spelling was on the whole good, when it is considered that English was not his mother-tongue, but certain peculiarities recur in the earlier letters, due to association with the Danish language, and occasionally he used a completely wrong word. With regard to Malay words and Far Eastern place names, each early writer had his own way of spelling them. In my own writing I have, in most cases, used forms now in general use, though to avoid confusion I have referred throughout to Thailand as Siam.

The book is based largely on Helms' own journals and papers, but it also contains other previously unpublished sources, and it could not have been written without the invaluable help I have had from others, especially from Captain Brooke's grandson, Vice-Admiral Basil Brooke, C.B., C.B.E., who has allowed me to use the Grant Papers, and also the two letters written by his father, the late Mr. Hope Brooke, to Helms; Mr. Tom Harrisson, head of the Sarawak Museum, who has so generously helped me in innumerable ways; and Mr. T.C. Martine, who has made a special study of the history of the Borneo Company. To these three, who have all been kind enough to read the Sarawak portion of my MS., I am particularly grateful.

I have also many others to thank; the late Prince Chula Chakrabongse of Thailand, who so kindly answered my question about gold and silver flowers; the late Dr. W.D. Lang, F.R.S., great-nephew of John Templer; Mr. Howard Linecar, Messrs. Spink & Sons, for the answer to a query about currency; Miss Holland, Librarian at the London Headquarters of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (S.P.G.); Miss P. Haydon, of the Dorset County Library staff; my friends Margaret Mackay and Roberta and the late Jean Meikle, for helpful suggestions and encouragement; and lastly, my sister Joan, who has been very patient.

Such history as may be found in this record I have tried, in the words of André Maurois, "to ally to the mysterious history once consisting of life itself," and I have tried, to the best of my ability, to do this impartially.

E. G.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EDITORS' NOTES..... i

FOREWORD..... 1

Part One - Early Days, 1825 - 1852..... 6

1) Denmark..... 7

2) The Journey..... 18

3) Bali, March 1847 - June 1848..... 29

4) Bali, June 1848 - June 1849..... 50

5) Interlude in California..... 64

6) Cambodia..... 73

7) Bangkok..... 81

Part Two - Sarawak, 1852 - 1863..... 91

8) Beginnings..... 93

9) The Chinese Insurrection..... 110

10) Rebuilding..... 139

11) The Lady in Love with Sarawak..... 150

12) Ann..... 167

13) Governor Edwardes..... 178

14) The Ceremony at the Court House..... 194

15) Orchids and Pirates..... 209

16) The Storm Breaks..... 224

17) The End of a Chapter..... 240

Part Three - Sarawak 1863 - 1872..... 258

18) Aftermath..... 259

19) Timber and Cinnabar..... 271

20) Two Lives Reach Their End..... 284

21) The New Dispensation..... 295

Part Four - The Later Years, 1872 - 1918..... 313

22) Home and a Lawsuit..... 314

23) Helms writes his Book..... 322

24) The Last Echo	331
POSTSCRIPT.....	335
THE BROOKE FAMILY.....	338
Appendix.....	339
Malay Words and Titles	342
Possible Illustrations	343
Bibliography	344
INDEX.....	346

Part One - Early Days, 1825 - 1852

"All through the ages little honour has been done to the merchant classes, yet the history of trade is the history of fruitful endeavour, and many a patient, heroic man lost his life in those early trading ventures, crossing bitter seas in search of new markets. All unknown they suffered and perished and theirs is not the least among the world's unsung Odysseys."

E. Gee Nash, The Hansa, its History and Romance,
(John Lane, 1929, p.14.)

"In September 1846 I left my native land, Denmark, to seek my fortunes in the world."

L.V. Helms in Pioneering in the Far East.

Chapter One

Denmark

Not far inland from the most westerly point of the Jutland coast lies the town of Varde, even today not very large, but in the first half of last century smaller still. There, on 14 April, 1825, a seventh son and thirteenth child was born to Rudolph Helms, Apoteker, Assessor Pharmaciae, (apothecary, pharmacist), by his second wife, and christened, according to the rites of the Danish Lutheran Church, Ludvig Verner. On the face of it nothing would have seemed more unlikely than that this boy should travel far from the land of his birth and play a small part in one of the more unusual adventures of history. Yet, by a strange turn of fate Ludvig Verner Helms was to do these very things, and in his life-story the superstitious may trace both the traditional good fortune of the seventh son and the ill luck attached for so many centuries to the number thirteen. Nothing could have been more remote from the Danish countryside than the tropical sunshine, the palm-fringed coast, and the almost untouched primitive life of the East Indies, and particularly of Sarawak, the very name of which was virtually unknown in Europe at that time, and, it is safe to say, would never have been heard in Varde.

The Helms family traces its descent back to the year 1579, when the man regarded as its founder, Adam Helms, was born in the Free and Hanse City of Lübeck, still proud, at that time, to owe allegiance to no authority outside her own boundaries.

Adam Helms was the son of a Lübeck merchant. He showed great promise at school and his father sent him to the University of Wittenberg where, in 1517, Luther nailed his famous theses to the

church door and started the Reformation. After three years at Wittenberg he went on to Rostock, where in due course he took his degree as Master of Philosophy. He became a pastor, and for forty years he served the Petrikirche, one of Lübeck's beautiful gothic churches. His portrait, in the black gown and white ruff which are worn by Danish Lutheran pastors to this day, was painted by Zacharias Kniller, father of Gottfried Kniller, (later to become, in England, the Restoration painter Sir Godfrey Kneller,) and it hung in the church until church and portrait were destroyed by Allied bombing during the Second World War.

The power of the Hanseatic League, of which Lübeck was the chief and controlling city, was in decline by the time Adam was born. It reached its zenith during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, when its merchants went out to all points of the compass; west to England and the Low Countries, north to Bergen, east along the Baltic to Visby in the island of Gotland, and as far as Novgorod in Russia. But by the late sixteenth century a series of wars against the Scandinavian powers had weakened it, and it had lost control of the all-important Baltic basin, while in England Queen Elizabeth I had withdrawn the trading privileges held by the Hanse Komtor in the City of London, known as the Steelyard.*

* The site remained the property of the League until 1853, when the cities of Lübeck, Hamburg and Bremen sold it. It is now occupied by Cannon Street Station.

Conditions were changing rapidly as each country developed its own trade, and could never again be what they had been. Nevertheless, the Hanseatic tradition was still strong and the Hanseatic principles were not dead. For the League was not only a great trading organisation but it represented a way of life. Its trading practices, regulated to the smallest details by the Lübeck Law, had

always rated integrity above all else, and in its hey-day every man who entered its service served a rigorous apprenticeship.

At the same time the general standard of living and the domestic conditions of the burghers of Lübeck reached a peak of culture and material comfort unsurpassed, in its own way, in Europe, and produced a city of fine buildings, adorned with the best that medieval craftsmanship, inspired by medieval piety, could produce. The city where Adam Helms lived and worked was still of much importance, and it was also beautiful.

Adam married twice. Of his numerous children and grandchildren some remained in their birthplace; one daughter, Appolonia, being recorded as having successively married three Master Tailors, no mean achievement in the days of the Guilds! But others went further afield, some into the Duchies of Holstein and Schleswig, one into Denmark, one to Visby, one as far east as Danzig. A few became pastors in their turn, but most of them, true to the Hanseatic tradition in their blood, were merchants.

So it came about that Adam's grandson Heinrich, found his way to the Danish town of Haderslev, became assistant to one Jacob Schultz, Apoteker, married his employer's daughter, Anna Catherina, and in due course succeeded to the business. He then adopted as his sign a golden lion rampant which he took from the armorial bearings granted to his father by the city of Lübeck. As the years went by more Helms men became apothecaries, and the lion came to be seen in Aalborg, Horsens, Flensburg and other Jutland and Slesvig towns. It is still to be seen in Flensburg, though the name of Helms has gone.

The apothecary or pharmacist in 19th Century Denmark held a peculiar position. Apothecaries had to be highly-educated men and had often studied at a university, and the Apotek or Dispensary

itself was a government monopoly, the number of privileges granted being limited, to ensure efficiency. They were under government supervision and were inspected at intervals by the Stiftsfysicus, the Government Medical Superintendent of the province.

Rudolph Helms' father, grandson of Heinrich, was a merchant in Horsens. An uncle had the Apotek in that town, but he had a son to succeed him, so when Rudolph qualified it was decided to apply for government permission to open a new business at Varde, where there was as yet no pharmacy. Suitable premises were found and the Apotek opened its doors in February 1800, its privilege extending for about twenty-four miles from north to south, and the same from east to west including the island of Fanø. Not only were drugs dispensed but chocolate was made and spices were dealt in. Apothecaries often became wealthy men, though Rudolph Helms never did, he had too large a family.

In the following year Rudolph married the daughter of Provst (Dean) Brøndsted of Horsens, but she died three years later at the birth of her second daughter. Eighteen months later he married again, and his second wife was Mathilde Augusta, daughter of Andreas Frausing Fridsch, of the nearby cathedral town of Ribe, a physician who was Stiftsfysicus for the district at the time.

Mathilde Augusta's favourite sister was already in Copenhagen, married to Conferentsraad (Councillor) Linde, 'Privy Purse' to King Frederik VI, having as such the charge of the King's private finances. Mathilde Augusta herself was two months from her seventeenth birthday when she became mistress of the house in Varde and stepmother to her husband's two little girls, and in the course of the years, nine sons and five daughters were born, of whom all but one boy lived to grow up.

To look back at life in the Denmark of Ludvig Verner's youth is to look back at something incredibly remote from our modern world. In later years he wrote a small book for his children in which he described life in his old home. Few and bad roads made communications difficult, added to which the nature of the country itself, with its many islands, necessitated much travelling by water. A journey from Varde to Copenhagen was not lightly to be undertaken, and he wrote how rarely his mother could visit her sister there:

"The packets in which the Baltic had to be crossed were small and uncomfortable, and the discomfort was increased by the suffering which a sea voyage caused my mother: So serious was this that on one occasion when she had embarked at Aarhus, the captain, fearing the consequences, had to return to port to land her. Whether she then returned home, or crossed the Belts in the small boats which plied there, I do not know, but that she got to Copenhagen at times is brought to my recollection by cakes and toys which were sure results of a visit to the metropolis."

Today the Jutland heath has been tamed to a very considerable extent. Land has been brought under cultivation by planting conifer forests as windbreaks and marram grass on the dunes to keep them firm against the gales, and marshes have been drained. But when Ludvig Verner was a boy it was still as it had been for centuries, largely a vast expanse of wind-blown sand on which little but heather could grow, but with a beauty all its own. In summer it stretched purple as far as the eye could see. No sound save the occasional cry of a bird broke the stillness, no living thing could be seen to move. Only across the landscape drifted the shadows of the white masses of cumulus clouds in the clear, pale blue sky. In winter the north-westerly storms would come tearing in from the North Sea and rage over the brown waste, or sometimes the bitter north-easters from the Baltic and far-off Russia, bringing snow with them, and then the heath became a white featureless plain.

Country communities had therefore to be largely self-supporting, but this, in some ways, was not altogether a disadvantage, for:

"Denmark, while a poor agricultural country, had a hardy and hard-working peasantry. Roads which hardly deserved the name, while checking exports made livestock abundant. Families of even small means could afford their joints of beef and mutton, there were no game-laws, and the cottagers brought in grouse, partridge, blackcock and hares, which were plentiful on the heath."

The streams provided trout and pike, and from Fanø came sea-fish, and there were eggs and butter in abundance, and plenty of cream to pour over the rødgrød.*

* Fruit juice, traditionally raspberry and red-currant, sweetened to taste and thickened.

"Our table was therefore abundantly supplied. My mother's cooking was famed... My sisters took their weeks of duty in the kitchen by turn, and they were not trifling duties, at meals something like a dozen sat down in the dining-room... There were certain times for slaughtering, sausage making, brewing, preserve making... Christmas was the great festival and a busy time... and there were certain kinds of confections peculiar to the season....

"Amongst them I remember small, round and very hard ginger nuts, to contain which each of us received a special bag. These nuts served as counters in our games, and as these went on for at least a fortnight during the holidays they were considerably discoloured at the end of that time, yet those whom luck had favoured and whose bags were therefore well filled, were much envied."

Besides the family and several maid-servants there were three other members of the household; the boys' tutor, the girls' governess, and the dispenser who helped in the Apotek. The tutors rarely remained more than a year or two. This was because they were always men who had taken university degrees which qualified them for appointments in the Church, and they accepted private engagements only to fill in the time until a curacy or living, (mostly in the gift of the government,) was in sight.

Children of two or three other families shared in the lessons:

"Some of the tutors were severe and caning was not uncommon, and of these favours my special chum and friend Harald was a not

infrequent recipient. I really believe that it was their affection for him which usually caused him these unpleasant attentions; he was very clever, they took a pride in him, and as he did not always do justice to his abilities they endeavoured in this way to assist him."

Many years later when Helms was home from the East, he called upon this boyhood's friend in Copenhagen. The canings had borne good fruit, he had had a brilliant career in the law!

With Sofie Bergreen, the governess, and Jacob Gyntelberg, the dispenser, it was otherwise than with the tutors. They had both identified themselves with their employers, shared their joys and sorrows, and become devoted members of the family. Through many years Sofie cared for her young charges, and for many years Jacob helped with the dispensing. He had come as a young man and endeared himself to them all. He was something of a poet, and "on special occasions such as wedding or birthday anniversaries was ever ready with simple and usually pretty and appropriate verses." His hobby was a large and rare collection of fancy pigeons, but his affections were not entirely absorbed by them; during the twenty years or so that he remained dispenser "his faithful heart nourished a secret love for Sofie Bergreen." During his leisure hours he occupied himself with medical books, in preparation for studies to be undertaken later in Copenhagen. These ended successfully with a degree in medicine, and then, at long last, he and his Sofie were able to marry, or as Helms put it:

"These two faithful hearts were joined in matrimony, to the great joy of us all, and for many years afterwards Doctor Gyntelberg sent prescriptions to the Apotek for others to make up."

A family of such size fell naturally into groups according to age. Ludvig Verner's elder step-sister, for instance, married when he was only six years old, and his eldest brother was already seventeen when he was born. Communications being as difficult as they were, it was not often that the brothers and sisters who had

already left home were able to see each other, or their parents. An unique occasion is thus described:

"One of my earliest recollections was the entry into our town of King Frederik the Sixth, the son of Queen Caroline Matilda, sister of King George the Third of England. Though I was only about five years old at the time, the transparencies and candles by which the town expressed its loyalty, are all clearly before me. It was the only time when all we brothers and sisters, fifteen of us, were gathered together under the parental roof; whether the gathering was due to the King's visit, an occasion that might never occur again, I do not know, - but I remember that at the special desire of a general in the King's suite who was lodged with us, we were all mustered.

"To my mother the event was one of special interest; her grandmother had been one of those who received the unhappy Queen at the [Danish] frontier, when, young and sprightly, she became the unwilling bride of a degenerate prince. Lonely, and surrounded by an intriguing court clique, she fell victim to an ambitious adventurer,* but among those around her she had some devoted adherents, and my ancestress was one of these, and later tended the King in his joyless childhood."*

* The German doctor Johann Friedrich Struensee. He met his death on the scaffold.

* After the Queen's banishment in 1772 to Celle, in Hanover. She died there three years later.

"My mother possessed several of her grandmother's mementos of that time. Amongst them I remember to have seen tiny white satin shoes, and leading-strings in which the King, as a babe, had toddled. These things were later asked for by, and presented to, a Copenhagen museum."

When Ludvig Verner was eight years old his father died. His mother was left with what was still a large family to care for. Although some of the older sons and daughters had left home the youngest child was not yet four. Mathilde Augusta brought them up piously and rather strictly; it was "a simple life in a happy home." The eldest son, now a qualified pharmacist, took over the Apotek, and life went on much as before, with the faithful Jacob Gyntelberg and his wife to help and advise.

The four youngest children, Ludvig Verner, Christense, the sister less than two years younger, and two other boys, naturally spent much time together. There was a remarkable physical likeness between Ludvig Verner and Christense, such as is usually seen only in twins, and there was a close link of affection also, though in their later lives they saw each other but rarely. To Stense, one suspects, young Verner confided the desire to see the world which was his earliest ambition, and with her discussed the possibility of becoming a sailor which appeared the best way of achieving it. Whether after schooling was finished he took any steps to that end I do not know; he left no precise record of events in the three or four years before his twenty first birthday. He worked in Copenhagen for a time, and in all probability it was during those years that he started to learn the English which was to stand him in good stead later on. What is certain is that there was no money to help him in his choice of a career, and when in 1846 his eldest brother announced his approaching marriage this may have decided him to leave Denmark, and to go out like the youngest son in the fairy-tale to seek his fortune. For the marriage would inevitably bring changes, and a new mistress to the old home.

A chance encounter determined the direction which he took.

Fortunes could often be made in those days by men willing to take risks; opportunities were limitless and the Far East in particular was attracting the adventurous. Europeans out there at that time were largely either Britons, in Singapore and the Chinese Treaty Ports, or Dutch, in Holland's old-established colonies in the East Indian islands. There was, of course, a sprinkling of other nationalities, and at least one early Danish settler:

"I made the acquaintance of a gentleman who had befriended one of my brothers, a retired merchant. A connection of his of the name of Lange had many years ago left Denmark as mate in a merchant

ship, and having eventually settled in the island of Bali had never returned. This story had fascinated me, the more so as the nature of the country and of his life was a mystery; the only known fact was that he was engaged in trade."

Ludvig Verner made up his mind. Here was the chance of which he had dreamed since early childhood. He would see the world, find this man, and, who knows? perhaps return to Denmark some day a wealthy East India merchant:

"... Young, full of health and spirits, and with all the world before me, I built a hundred castles in the air... There was indeed a great fascination about Bali, no one that I had ever come across had been to it, even in books there was little to be learnt concerning it, but that little was of a nature to excite one's curiosity. It was described as a small paradise... inhabited by an interesting, handsome race of natives who were independent, proud, and unwilling to admit Europeans among them. One stranger only, this countryman of my own, had managed to establish himself there... Romantic stories of his doings, his influence and his wealth, were afloat. These had captivated my imagination, and... I had determined to visit him and offer him my services."

Armed with a letter of introduction to Lange, an order on a Hamburg banker for his passage money, and apart from that a very slender purse, he made his plans. In Hamburg he might expect to find, with no great delay, a ship sailing for Singapore and willing to take a passenger. Once in Singapore the further journey to Bali should present no insurmountable difficulties.

In the third week of August, 1846, a big farewell gathering was held at the Apotek. Relatives and friends were there, speeches were made and healths were drunk, and Doctor Gyntelberg composed one of his best poems for the occasion: "for it was then an unusual event in Denmark for a young man to go to the Far East, still shrouded in mystery and romance." Next morning he said farewell to his mother and Christense, and set out by coach.

The journey had begun which was, in the end, to take him to the country of the White Rajahs.



Sketch map of Denmark and the Duchies. The dotted line shows the frontier between 1864 and 1920.

Chapter Two

The Journey

The journey from Varde to Hamburg was a complicated matter in 1846 and had to be done in three stages, by coach, water and rail. Helms' first letter home, written in Hamburg on August 27, tells how he and his fellow-passengers drove east to Haderslev, where his brother Conrad, who worked there, met him and waved goodbye as he left on the second lap of the journey, the last member of his family whom he would see for many years. Several hours more took them to Aabenraa, at the head of its wooded Baltic fjord. Gone was the flat, windswept heath-country of the west; instead the beech forests grew down through gently undulating country to the shores of the tideless sea, giving a landscape of peaceful beauty under the summer sun. Here the travellers embarked in a small steamboat for Kiel, and "the Captain was a Schleswig-Holsteiner with whom I had a keen discussion."

This simple statement is, in fact, a straw which showed the way the wind was blowing in that part of the world at the time. It is a mention of what became known to Europe as the Schleswig-Holstein question, though the opening of the most acute phase of that question still lay some two years ahead.

Since very early days the two Duchies had been sometimes united, sometimes separated, under differing princely and ducal houses, and questions of overlordships, complicated by every conceivable intricacy of succession, involved even the Danish Crown. Though the Congress of Vienna incorporated Holstein in the German Confederation, Christian VIII of Denmark proclaimed

officially in 1846 that Schleswig and the greater part of Holstein were indissolubly connected with the Danish monarchy. Danish sovereignty extended as far as the boundaries of Lübeck and Hamburg, and the whole region was still governed from Copenhagen. The Holsteiners were becoming restive.

There is a vast literature on the subject in both Danish and German, mostly written purely from the political standpoint. In Schleswig-Holstein itself people still quote Palmerston's remark: "The question is so complicated that only three people have ever understood it. The first was the Prince Consort, but he is dead; the second was a professor, but he went mad over it; I, Palmerston, was the third, but I have forgotten it!" The kernel of the problem as it affected the lives of the inhabitants was, however, that while the majority in Holstein and the southern half of Schleswig were, and are, German in feeling, those of northern Slesvig were, and are, as truly Danish. A few far-sighted men at Vienna advocated a partition of the northern Duchy on the line of language, but the pressures of power politics were too strong. The German inhabitants of both Duchies asserted the old principle of their essential unity, and adopted the battle cry "up ewig ungedeelt," (forever undivided.) The captain of the steamboat would have been such a one.

In the coming years Denmark was to fight two wars against Prussia, and to lose her sovereignty not only over the German portions of the Duchies, but also over the Danish portion. More than seventy years were to pass before the division on the line of language was drawn as the result of a plebiscite after the First World War. This line, running from north of Elensburg in the east to south of Tønder in the west, has proved itself as satisfactory

as settlements in frontier lands can ever be, where minorities must, perforce, be left on either side of the line and it stood the test of the Second World War. But Helms would not live to see it, and as an old man he would tell his grandchildren how the Danes of Sonderjylland* kept the Dannebrog* hidden in their homes, against the day when it could again be flown.

* South Jutland, the historic Danish name for Slesvig.

* The Danish flag, white cross on a red ground. The oldest unchanged national flag now in existence, dating from the 13th century.

In 1846 West European countries were starting to develop their railway systems. No line had as yet been built in Denmark proper, but there was one in Holstein, from Kiel to Hamburg. The third stage of the journey was by rail, the first train that Helms had seen. He was "astonished at its speed and the great number of passengers it carried!"

Next morning, in company with two travelling companions, he set about seeing Hamburg, which was then still in process of rebuilding after the disastrous fire of 1842 which raged for four days and nights, and destroyed practically the whole of the old town and all the business quarter. But it was rising from the ashes, planned with wide streets, and "very magnificent buildings and shops, far exceeding those of Copenhagen."

At the Exchange he found his cousin Brøndsted, and also the representative of the banker from whom he was to draw money for his passage. He also found a letter from a Copenhagen friend, Pastor Rafar, who wrote that: "having ascertained that I had left without a passport, which he feared might bring me into difficulties, he had communicated with the Danish Minister in Hamburg."

The Minister supplied the document, though, strange as it may seem today, it was not needed:

"But it was a kind thought and added to my obligation to Pastor Rafar, who had already supplied me with a letter of introduction to his married daughter, Mrs. Smuts, in Stellenbosch, Cape Colony.

"With the assistance of Herr Mestern's representative I now set about looking for a vessel to carry me to the East, and we soon found a brig, the Johanna Caesar of 120 tons, which was loading for Singapore, and in her I engaged a passage."

The master, Captain Elberfeld, was "a kindly, broad-shouldered little man, who looked and proved to be a good sailor, as well as good natured but with no pretensions to culture of any kind." Two mates and eleven seamen made up the ship's crew.

"Next day I went to the harbour to examine what for some months to come was to be my home. I found the boat in a condition of great confusion, and although I was told that there would be eight other passengers there was no trace of any accommodation for them... To my perplexed enquiry as to where they would be put it was explained that a space would be boarded up amidships. I had not entertained any great ideas as to accommodation, but the idea that provision was only now to be made did not promise well for comfort, and what to me was far more serious, it would delay my stay in Hamburg which would not agree with my lean purse. However, the prospect before me seemed too enchanting to admit of any anxieties, which moreover were at once relieved by my cousin, who took me to his home... and in his charming family I was made thoroughly at home."

To his mother he wrote:

Hamburg, 10th September.

"... I am having a most enjoyable time; have been to two theatres and heard Jenny Lind sing, the Swedish nightingale they call her, and not without reason, her voice is wonderful... Called at the Minister's office and was told that he wanted to see me at his home... I was most kindly received. He told me, greatly to my surprise, that he had asked me to call in order to learn whether he could do anything for me... his action was due to an official communication having reached him from Copenhagen, (probably through Uncle Linde.) It occurred to me that a letter of introduction in Singapore from an influential quarter might be useful, and I made this request, to which he willingly acceded."

This letter was, however, not needed, as one was obtained from a Senator Meyer who had a son-in-law out there:

"I went with Brøndsted to his office and had a most friendly reception from young Mayer, who said that the letter would be at my service... Had an invitation to dine from Herr Mestern, who is one of Hamburg's great merchants... I... found a magnificent establishment, he is a great art-collector and has a perfect picture gallery. We sat down twenty to a luxurious dinner, you will see that I am in clover."

Hamburg, 15th September.

"The Johanna Caesar has this morning dropped down the river to Stade where she will receive the rest of her cargo, and I join her today. Senator Meyer has given me a splendid letter to his children in Singapore, everybody has been most kind. Brøndsted's kindness has been beyond measure, his wife has sent all sorts of goodies on board for me. I would ask you, dear Mother, to write and thank them..."

off Stade, 19th September.

"This is my fourth day on board and I have made myself acquainted with my fellow passengers, consisting of eight persons, including two children, as follows:- A German painter who is the father of the children, with his mother and wife, the latter a native of the Cape, whither they are returning after a visit to Saxony, his native land; two doctors and a young man, a goldsmith, all bound for the Cape, make up the party. From there I will be the only passenger. The elder doctor is probably near seventy years of age, he is a Dutchman and seems to combine preaching with medicine; the younger man, who has his family in the Cape, is a German, and very companionable which is as well, as he and I are to occupy one of the four sleeping compartments."

These cabins, each with an upper and lower berth, were arranged two on each side, and in the space between them was the table for meals, in which the Captain and the mates joined:

"I find that if not a very elegant we yet make a sociable and contented party. We are sailing and drifting down the river and will soon be at sea."

off Dover, 30th September.

"I write this in sight of the English coast. Having left the Elbe on the 22nd we reached the entrance to the Channel in three days, but here we met with contrary winds, and the weather, which hitherto had been fine, became wet and stormy. We were driven back into the North Sea, where we were tossed about, slowly beating against wind and weather till the morning, when we again saw the

French and English coasts. During the last six days we have all greatly suffered from sea-sickness and only the younger doctor and I have recovered, and can enjoy observing the English coast and the beautiful island of Wight, as we slowly sail down Channel."

In the latitude of Cape of Good Hope, 3rd December.

"My last letter was handed to an English pilot, I trust it came to hand. We had a fair wind through the English Channel which we cleared in four days, and on the 4th of October we were in the Bay of Biscay... We beat out of the Channel with eighty-five ships which had been wind-bound, and we were the first out. There is much danger of collision when so large a number of ships beat out together... We had a narrow escape, a great American ship was bearing down upon us, but as we had the right of way our Captain took no notice and continued his course. But the Yankee made no sign of avoiding us... the shouts of our men were answered by curses, they clearly showed a malignant disregard of our safety, and as their bowsprit towered over the stern of the little brig we thought ourselves lost. Luckily she only scraped our stern without doing other injury than the tearing of our mainsail."

From this point Helms' reminiscences of his journey are no longer in letter form. Presumably opportunities of mailing were scarce, often non-existent, and he relied on a record which he kept and from which he assembled his memoirs later:

"The wind increased to a gale, and it got bitterly cold. The little vessel became distressingly lively, and it was dangerous to move about, we were miserably sea-sick and battened down. No fresh air could enter the cabins, and this lasted four days, during which time no food was taken or indeed obtainable, as no communication could be had with the deck.... On the fourth day, when the gale had abated, we came forth, an emaciated, wretched-looking lot. The sea was still running mountains high, but the wind coming from the north-west had been in our favour.. During the gale, on the 7th of October, a young sailor was washed overboard, this added to the gloomy feeling which prevailed..."

But on the 15th of October they sighted and passed Cape Finisterre and next morning the wind moderated. The sky cleared, though even off the straits of Gibraltar it was still very cold. Two days later, however, they were able to dispense with their warm coats and wraps, and next day sighted Madeira; then the Peak of Teneriffe.

The weather was now lovely, blue skies and smooth seas:

"I had glowing health, a light heart, and the world before me. That the boat was small and the accommodation poor; that the fare was pea soup, salt junk, heavy dough and dumplings, with an occasional porpoise steak; that the company at meals was somewhat unkempt; that the baby screamed and its mother scolded; all seemed natural and proper, and I felt as comfortable and happy as in any ocean liner in later days."

On the 25th and 26th they passed the Cape Verde Islands, mountainous shimmering in the heat, here and there showing patches of tropical vegetation. They were now in light trade winds, sailing in a south-westerly direction but at times becalmed, the sea clear and smooth as a mirror, the sails flapping heavily, the passengers stretched lazily under an awning, the sailors busy washing, scraping and painting:

"The gulls had now forsaken us and the Cape pigeons and albatross had not yet made their appearance, but shoals of flying-fish could be seen skimming the waves... our boat being low in the water they frequently fell on deck and proved delicate morsels. Numerous whales were to be seen, blowing water into the air. I well remember one night, the full moon was shining on a glassy sea, I was alone with the man at the helm, picturing in my mind the gorgeous and mysterious world towards which I was travelling, and wondering what it would have in store for me. Suddenly a peculiar dull, booming noise woke me from my reverie, and quite close to the ship the broad back of a huge whale rose out of the water. For fully two hours it followed us... I tired not of watching its gambols, till suddenly I felt myself soaked by a shower of water from its spouting, which brought my vigil to an end."

The brig reached Table Bay on December 8th, thirty-four days after leaving the Channel:

"The Captain's chronometer being wrong, at least so he said, we searched in vain for the longed-for haven. The uncertainty of our position caused some anxiety on board, as the chart showed a lot of shoals and rocks, moreover on the last night a gale came on while the shoaling water indicated the nearness of land. However, here we are and all's well that ends well."

Although it was already forty years since Great Britain had acquired Cape Colony from the Dutch it still appeared to be more

Dutch than English, and the few Europeans he saw among the native crowds after landing were Dutch:

"The mixture of tropical and sub-tropical vegetation in all the freshness of summer, the villas surrounded by gardens which dotted the slopes of Table Mountain, the cornfields, vineyards and fruit plantations, were all delightful to the eye, so long accustomed to the monotony of a long sea voyage."

He received much hospitality which was, in those days of slow communications, willingly extended to travellers, "when a visitor fresh from Europe was a godsend, to be feted, made much of and interrogated," and after a fortnight in Capetown went on to Stellenbosch, to make use of Pastor Rafar's letter of introduction to his daughter, Mrs. Smuts, for whom he had messages from her parents.

The journey to Stellenbosch was made by a wagon drawn by eight oxen and took about four hours through barren country, the sand so deep in places that the travellers had to get out to lighten the load.

His visit to Dr. and Mrs. Smuts proved most enjoyable:

"Nothing could exceed the cordiality of my reception... In the company of my host and hostess I spent two delightful days, drove and rode all over the country, and visited a number of Boers. I was greatly impressed with the magnitude of their estates... their conditions were patriarchal, as was their hospitality. They appeared to me to be a sturdy race, tall and powerfully built, devout after their fashion, but obstinate, and not easily brought to accept new men and things... I received more than one invitation to prolong my stay, but the brig was getting ready and I must return to town...

"All was now ready for our departure... My fellow passengers remained in the Cape. I was sole occupant of the cabins. With books to read and with sanguine day-dreams of the future, time passed pleasantly across the Indian Ocean. I had no certain aim in view, but the world was wide, and visions of the East supplied materials for many airy castles which rested, meanwhile, upon the slender foundation of the letter of recommendation given to me by my friend in Copenhagen to the mysterious person Mr. Lange, in the island of Bali."

It was a lonely sail; they saw only one ship between the African coast and the Strait of Sunda. This was an East Indiaman, full of passengers who crowded the deck to look at their little ship. The first land they sighted was the island of Engano, off the south-west of Sumatra. Three days later they entered Sunda Strait:

"Beating up amongst the maze of islands was tedious work, we were often becalmed, often brought to anchor by an adverse tide. Running into mudbanks, sometimes swept back many laboriously gained miles by the currents, it was a progress which required patience, but... we were apparently not in a hurry. The little craft often neared the shores to within a stone's throw, and sometimes we were able to land and wander about for a while, never seeing a human being, for these islands seemed all uninhabited, the silence only broken by the gentle beating of the sea upon the beaches, the occasional call of a bird and the hum of insects. Then, while the carpenter cut spars, I amused myself watching the monkeys, endeavouring to catch butterflies and moths, and generally admiring this new world."

They reached their destination on the 26th of February after a five months voyage, and he described Singapore as it was at that time, already an "imposing town," with the Governor's residence overlooking the esplanades, gardens, church, court-house, villas on the sea-shore and thriving business quarter. But there were no wharves, and all loading and unloading had to be done by boats and lighters:

"There were ships of many nations at anchor, and their graceful outlines, lofty masts and spars, contrasted oddly with the uncouth appearance and fantastic old-world build of a fleet of Chinese junks with their painted eyes. Mingled with these were Malay prahus, and some yellow-painted vessels which might have been derelicts from the days of Anson, but which I was told came from Cochin China...

"The small European community spent their leisure time pleasantly enough; the roads were good, and during the cool hours of early morning everyone was out on horseback or on foot. But except for sportsmen, excursions into the interior were dangerous, for tigers taxed the population at the rate of rather more than one man per day, they arrived from the mainland, managing to swim across the narrow strait.

"In after years I saw more of Singapore life, but on that first occasion my stay was short, and my time was mainly taken up in collecting information concerning Bali. The accounts were not encouraging, the natives were described as inhospitable and ferocious, and I was advised not to go there. But I determined not to abandon the plan, and I accordingly engaged a passage in the American ship Michael Angelo, which was bound for the island of Lombok, only separated from Bali by a strait. The Captain promised to land me at Bali, and in the course of the voyage he determined himself to examine the trading resources of that island."



Sketch map of the Far East as known to Helms.

Chapter Three

Bali, March 1847 - June 1848

The Michael Angelo left Singapore early in March, and eight days sail brought them to Ampenam, in Lombok:

"A dangerous surf was running... but we landed safely and proceeded towards the establishment of a gentleman of the name of King, in whose hands was the rice trade of the place, of which article the Michael Angelo had come to seek a cargo. If this place was a pattern of Mr. Lange's establishment the prospect was not pleasing. Uncomfortable, shanty-like buildings, fortified and armed with cannon, betokened anything but security, nor did my dreams of the luxurious and gorgeous East find more realisation in the rough and comfortless interior. But most depressing of all was the emaciated appearance of three or four gentlemen who occupied the buildings, - it looked more like a fortified place of refuge in an enemy's country in which the garrison had suffered from starvation, than a mercantile trading-post. Much to my satisfaction we found that no cargo could be obtained and it was resolved to seek one in Bali...."

This sight of "the establishment of a gentleman of the name of King" was Helms' first contact with a tangle of commercial rivalries and personal enmities, set against a background of power politics, which troubled the islands of Bali and Lombok for many years, and which, at this date, was approaching its climax. Two years later this tangle was to have a decisive influence on Helms' own life, and in order to understand the situation it is necessary to go back some thirteen years. In it were concerned local Rajahs, Dutch soldiers and officials, and two men, of whom Mads Lange, the Dane, was one, and George King, an Englishman, the other. Both had set out to seek their fortunes, and both succeeded for a time, until at last events proved too strong for them.

The Dane was a remarkable man, and the tale of his adventurous life was rescued from oblivion by his fellow-countryman, Aage Krarup Nielsen, who in 1925 published a biography, Mads Lange til Bali, written after careful research in Denmark, in Bali itself, in Dutch colonial archives, and in Helms' papers, since Helms was the only one of Lange's assistants to leave a written record, and one of the few to leave a description of life in Bali in those years. And in Nielsen's book is also to be found what little is known about the Englishman.

Mads Lange was born in September 1807, at Rudkøbing, in the Danish island of Langeland. Rudkøbing has been the home of seafarers since time immemorial; in the early years of last century it was the home port of many sailing ships, often owned and worked by local families, and Lange, one of ten children, went to sea at an early age. He eventually became first officer of the trading-ship Syden, of 800 tons, owned and commanded by Captain John Burd, a man of Scottish descent but born in Denmark. In the autumn of 1833 they sailed for India and China. Three of Lange's brothers went with him, and this was the last time that any of the four saw their native land. The two youngest met their deaths at sea, the two eldest, though they often planned to return, were never again able to set their course for home.

Burd eventually decided to settle in Hongkong as a merchant, and took his chief officer into partnership. He himself was to look after their interests in Hongkong and Canton, while Lange, taking the Syden was to try and get a foothold on the island of Lombok, in order to develop trade there and in neighbouring Bali.

The islands were geographically in a most favourable position for such a venture. Through Lombok Strait passed the sailing route

from Singapore, Batavia and Sourabaya to Australia, and at certain times of the year ships from Europe to Java passed south of Java, and north through the Bali strait. Opportunities for trade were therefore excellent; inwards with cotton goods from Europe, opium from China, gunpowder and firearms for the constant small wars between rival kingdoms; outwards with cattle, spices, palm-oil, coffee, and especially rice. Of this there was always a large surplus, particularly in Bali, where, owing to an irrigation system based on the mountain lakes the islanders were able to raise two crops yearly. All this business had hitherto been in the hands of Chinese, Arab and Buginese merchants, no European had succeeded in obtaining a firm foothold, though one or two companies from Batavia had tried at different times. The enterprise was not without its dangers. Harbours were poor or non-existent, the cargo of any stranded ship belonged by old-established custom to the local Rajah whoever he might be, and ship-wrecked mariners must be glad to escape with their lives, while the open seas swarmed with pirates. Hence any ship trading in those waters had to be heavily armed and equipped almost as a man-of-war, as was the Syden.

There were at that date eight kingdoms in Bali. The chief, so to speak 'mother state,' was that of Klung Kung, the ruler of which, the Rajah Dewa* Agung Ketoet, Supreme Sovereign, was allowed precedence of honour, and, as his title shows, enjoyed hereditary sanctity. The origins of this went far back into history, to the

* Sanskrit, deva = god, shining one.

time when Bali had been united under one ruler who was a direct descendant of the Madjapahit dynasty which ruled the great Hindu-Javanese kingdom on Java, and which, after that kingdom's fall in the 15th century, sought refuge on Bali. The islands of Bali and Lombok alone retained the Hindu faith when the larger East Indian

islands embraced Islam, and on Lombok there were two kingdoms, Karangasem-Lombok and Mataram, the ruling dynasties of which were related to ruling dynasties in Bali. Of internal conditions in the islands at that time Helms wrote later:

"... for domestic purposes slavery was still in force. All prisoners taken in war, certain classes of criminals, insolvent debtors, etc., became slaves. The Balinese were not, however, hard taskmasters, and... the relations between freemen and slaves seemed kindly, but, in reality the entire people were the slaves of their Rajahs who governed them with the most despotic power."

The Dutch had been unable to bring the two kingdoms within their colonial system, for both princes and people were suspicious of them and jealous of their independence.

In 1834 Mads Lange obtained permission from the Rajah of Karangasem-Lombok to settle in the little harbour town of Tandjong Karang and carry on trade, subject to the payment of a yearly sum. He soon obtained a virtual monopoly and became the Rajah's chief adviser. Considerable information as to the extent of his activities exists in confidential Dutch reports quoted by Nielsen. Holland was always apprehensive lest Bali and Lombok should fall to any other European power. During the Napoleonic wars England had had occupation forces in the larger Dutch East Indian islands, and apparently small detachments on Bali and Lombok also, and after their withdrawal several English merchants tried to establish themselves there, but without success. In subsequent years, however, Britain seems to have made no attempt to extend her influence.

It is at this point that we first hear of George King, mentioned as being in command of a brig lying at Ampenam.

King was born in Bengal, and was, like Lange, both sailor and merchant. At one time he was partner in the trading company of

Morgan, King & Co., of Batavia, and sailed his own ship round the islands to the small agencies which the firm had established in various places, including Bali, Lombok and Macassar. The firm failed in 1834, and King decided to try on his own to find a suitable place in which to establish himself. Like Lange he was attracted by Lombok, and in 1835 he asked permission to settle from the Rajah of Karangasem-Lombok. This was refused. Lange knew that he had in King a dangerous rival; a man, moreover, of a more ruthless type than himself.

King retreated to Bali and bided his time. In the following year he approached the Rajah of Mataram, who granted his request, and in a short time he occupied the same position in Mataram as Lange occupied in Karangasem.

In this same year the old Rajah of Karangasem died and was succeeded by his son, who ruled largely under the influence of his sister, a redoubtable woman of great ambition.

For two years the Dane and the Englishman worked peacefully each in his own sphere of influence. Trade thrived, many ships called at the island, and the Syden and the Falcon, the two big ships belonging to Burd and Lange, sailed continuously between Lombok and Hongkong, Singapore and other ports.

Holland surveyed these activities with considerable suspicion, and waited for a suitable opportunity, not only to compel the Rajahs to recognise her sovereignty, but also to divert this profitable trade to Batavia. In 1836 she sent a corvette to examine and report on conditions in the island, and further confidential reports show that all movements were carefully watched. Evidence exists that until the beginning of 1838 Lange and King remained on good terms, but then a series of dramatic and dangerous events

began.

Relations between the two Lombok kingdoms had long been strained. The roots of this went back many years, and to the wars between the Bali kingdoms with which both were connected. But the immediate cause for the war which broke out in January 1838 was an irrigation system, coupled with personal accusations by the Rajah of Mataram against the Rajah of Karangasem. King saw an opportunity of getting rid of Lange, whom he had never forgiven for hindering his settlement on Lombok, and in the end the rival merchants were involved in war to the knife, although Lange took no active part in the hostilities until May, when already the tide was turning in favour of Mataram. At that time Captain Burd arrived in the Syden, and hurried off to Batavia to try and get arms and ammunition, taking with him an envoy from Karangasem appealing to the Dutch for help against Mataram and against King, who was understood to be largely responsible for what was happening.

The Dutch decided to send a warship to Lombok, but meanwhile King had been able to bring fighting men and arms across from Bali, and although Lange was able partially to blockade the coast he was unable to stop the landings completely, particularly since King sometimes flew the English flag on his ships, and sometimes the Dutch, whichever suited him best at the moment. And while Burd's mission was still in Batavia events took a decisive turn. In spite of Lange's efforts both at sea and on land, more and more of the Karangasem forces deserted, and in the end King, at the head of the Mataram army, captured Tandjon Karang. The Rajah and the Princess Tjokorda*, surrounded in their palace, followed the age-old custom

* Tjokorda, a title signifying 'feet,' coming from a time when low-caste Balinese were not permitted to stand when addressing a superior, or even look at him, but must look at and address "your

honour's feet."

The Night of Purnama, by Anna Mathews, p.52. (Jonathan Cape.)
of the defeated, namely self-immolation with all their relatives and household, some three hundred persons in all, the Princess herself setting fire to the palace and then stabbing first her brother and then herself. Nielsen says that Lange later told the Dutch scientist Dr. van Hoeffell that the princely family, as a mark of their esteem, invited him to form part of the holocaust, but that while thanking them for the honour done him he had felt bound to refuse!

King and the Mataram party now set about consolidating their victory and as a first step placed a young Rajah, Ida Ratu, in power in Karangasem. It is not clear from what dynasty he came, but he was to be more or less the vassal of Mataram, for King saw clearly that if he was to obtain the absolute monopoly of trade at which he aimed, it would be necessary to unite the two kingdoms. Meanwhile two Dutch warships visited Lombok at different times, and King lost no opportunity of presenting Mataram activities in a favourable light.

For a further six months Lange worked hard to rebuild what the war had destroyed for his partner and himself, but in May 1839 the Rajah of Mataram, apparently at King's instigation, declared war on the young Rajah whom he had himself placed in power. Karangasem had not had sufficient time to recover; Lange himself fought bravely at the young Rajah's side, but the forces were unequal and in four days all was over. Ida Ratu fled to the interior, where he was taken prisoner and later murdered. Lange saved his own life at the last moment, thanks to the swiftness of his horse. One man had hold of the bridle, another seized the tail, but he cut down the one and shot the other, and reaching the coast swam to his little schooner,

the Venus, which was lying at anchor. His premises went up in flames and he lost everything except the schooner, in which he then set sail for Bali.

King was left in undisputed possession. He became Chief Minister to the Rajah of Mataram, and disposed over the royal seal and all the harbour dues of the island. The ships of Lange and Burd were fired on if they approached, on the excuse that they flew the Dutch flag. For once firmly in the saddle King began to make no secret of his pro-English and anti-Dutch feelings, talking openly of his intention of keeping Dutch influence out of Lombok, and at one time Holland feared some move to put the island into British hands, as an excellent port of call on the Australian route. Trade flourished, and in 1840 an English war vessel reported twenty-five English ships calling at Ampenam to load rice, and many American whalers being provisioned there.

Lange meanwhile established himself in the kingdom of Badong, in the south of Bali. This kingdom possessed the best harbours in the island and had therefore acquired commercial superiority, and both he and King had had small trading posts at Kuta. Their ships had called there regularly, and it was to Kuta that King retreated when Lange prevented his settlement on Lombok in 1835.

Rajah Kassiman, ruler of Badong at that time and for over thirty years, was a remarkable man, described by Nielsen as "clever, wily, powerful and hospitable," and by Helms in his memoirs as follows:

"The Balinese are a fine race of men, and there was no finer specimen than old Rajah Kassiman... Over seventy years of age, with long, flowing white hair, tall, erect and portly, when walking under his golden umbrella with stately step, surrounded by a large revenue, he looked every inch a king."

Since the Dutch authorities had expressed disapproval of the Bali activities of both merchants, on the grounds that too much trade was thereby diverted from Java, Rajah Kassiman allowed De Nederlandsche Handel-Maatschappij (D.N.H.M.) to set up an agency at Kuta, after their representative had been refused permission to do so in Karangasem, Bali, (the kingdom from which had sprung that of Karangasem-Lombok.)

Lange, starting again from scratch, set up his establishment side by side with that of his powerful rivals; a venture which at first sight seemed hopelessly foolhardy. But thanks to his colossal energy and to his ability to win the confidence not only of the Rajah, but also of the Balinese people, the next few years became the happiest and most successful of his life. Owing to the good relations which he established with Rajah Kassiman he was able to enter the royal palace informally as a friend, while the Dutch, in spite of their official letters and the gifts they brought, were regarded with mistrust. Also, he had no difficulty in obtaining as much Balinese labour as he needed while the Dutch continually ran into difficulties in this respect.

It was not long, therefore, before the Dutch recognised "that from many points of view it is in our interest to keep this man our friend," and in June 1843 they granted him citizenship of the Netherlands East Indies, a privilege jealously guarded. In the following year the D.N.H.M. decided to withdraw from Bali. It transferred its premises to him and was compensated by the Dutch Government, which then made "Mads Lange, who is the only European [permanently] resident in Bali," their agent in the island, and gave him the right to fly the Dutch flag over his establishment.*

* Official communications quoted by Nielsen.

Helms wrote of him:

"Though his sympathies were with the Balinese, yet Dutch memoirs bear witness to his generous zeal for the interest not only of the Dutch Government but of individuals. They testify to his protecting influence over life and property, and how the castaway found shelter under his hospitable roof."

To his stormy years on Lombok now succeeded a time "when fortune smiled upon him and his labours bore rich fruit."

(Nielsen.) But this time was not to last long. Two years later, in 1846, threatening clouds began to gather.

The cause was the unwillingness of the island Rajahs to recognise Dutch sovereignty, or to change their age-old customs, particularly that which gave them possession of stranded ships, which the Dutch regarded as piracy.

They attempted to make individual agreements, with the two northern kingdoms in particular, since these held the coasts of the north and east of the island. But the Rajahs of Beliling and Karangasem-Bali, who were brothers, refused to sign. In the former kingdom the Dutch representatives were received in such a manner that it was decided to mount a military expedition against it. An ultimatum was sent but was ignored, and at the end of June the Dutch launched an attack under cover of a bombardment. They landed, and took the town of Beliling which went up in flames, and the following day went on to take the town of Singaradja, where the Rajah had his palace. The Balinese fought with great gallantry, but were unable to hold out against European arms, and they retreated to the interior, whither the Dutch decided not to follow them. Thus began the Balinese resistance with which the name of Gusti* Ketoet Djilantek, Chief Minister of Beliling, is associated.

* Gusti, title borne by Balinese of noble descent. It carried with it certain privileges, and no one bearing it could be condemned to death.

Amongst those who watched the proceedings from off the coast

was George King, come from Lombok in his three-master to fish in troubled waters on behalf of the Rajah of Mataram, whose quarrel with the former state of Karangasem-Lombok also extended to that of Karangasem-Bali, and who was therefore, in spite of the anti-Dutch policy which he often proclaimed, not averse to a Balinese defeat. King had been instructed to offer the Dutch any possible help, an offer which, however, was refused.

Lange, friend of the Balinese, yet on good terms with the Dutch and agent of their government, tried from the first to act as mediator, and offered to be the bearer of a letter to the two Rajahs from the Dutch Commander, suggesting a meeting. Accompanied only by his Balinese clerk and one servant, and riding the Commander's horse, he delivered it, in spite of the universal opinion of the members of the expeditionary force that he would be murdered. A Danish translation of the letter which he wrote in English to the Dutch Commissioner for Bali immediately after his return from his mission, is given by Nielsen. Both the Rajahs and Gusti Djilantek had declined the suggestion, on account they said, of illness, the Chief Minister being even more emphatic in his refusal than the other two. However, Lange managed to persuade the Rajah of Karangasem that a meeting might be advantageous, and on his brother's behalf he came to Beliling on July 7, and an agreement was reached. The main provisions of this were that the two Rajahs were to pay the costs of the expedition, payment to be spread over the next ten years; a small Dutch garrison was to be stationed at Beliling for the support of which they should also pay; and all entrenchments were to be destroyed within three months and no new ones made. The Dutch held a review of their troops and gave a big breakfast at which the Balinese delegates were present, and the fleet then sailed for Java. The result of the warlike

enterprise had been eminently satisfactory from the Dutch point of view, "at least on paper" as Nielsen significantly remarks.

An uneasy peace endured for another two years. In the southern kingdoms of Badong and Tabanan, which had not been affected by hostilities, Lange's business grew and flourished. This was the position when Helms arrived in March 1847, and we will now go back to his vivid description of the last lap of his long journey, at the end of which he met "that mysterious person Mr. Lange."

First he described the great beauty of the landscape which he saw as the ship neared the coast of Bali at sunset; the bright green paddy fields, the fruit-gardens and cultivated patches of many colours, rising in gentle slopes towards mountain ranges culminating in the volcanic peak of Gunung Agung (Great Mountain,) which:

"... looked like a mighty sentinel guarding the entrance to the Strait of Lombok over which it was casting its vast shadow, while its western face, illuminated by the setting sun, showed in rugged outlines and ruddy hues the lines of lava streams of past eruptions."

The disillusion caused by the sight of King's Lombok establishment was forgotten:

"With strangely mingled emotions I beheld the reality of the dreamland of my early visions... the first view of which, strange to say, caused... no feeling of disappointment."

Anchoring in a shallow bay, some distance from the shore, they saw no human habitation, but a number of canoes with two men in each were engaged in fishing, and presently one came alongside:

"My stock of recently acquired Malay proved useless, but by repeating the name Lange I succeeded in making them understand that I wished to be conveyed to that gentleman's establishment... Night had fallen, it was illuminated by hundreds of bright lights from the fishermen's torches which they used to attract the fish..."

He was lowered into the canoe, which was simply the trunk of a tree hollowed out, with one outrigger, so unsteady that he had to

hold on to the gunwale with both hands. After a long pull they neared the shore and entered a narrow stream fringed with trees which rendered the darkness even more intense:

"... I began to wonder whither I was being carried, no explanations were obtainable from my companions, and as we paddled on in the gloom the hard seat of the unsteady boat increased my physical discomfort, while all the stories of the savage character of the natives which had been told me in Singapore... intensified my desire to see the end of the journey.

"It was past midnight when at last there seemed a break in the palm groves, the boat was made fast and I stepped ashore. Before me towered an arched gateway surmounted by a flagstaff. We knocked at the gate, but long in vain. At last a voice was heard and a long parley eventually led to the withdrawing of a slide disclosing an opening through which we were examined..."

A side-door was then opened and a very singular figure appeared, small, lean, with one arm, a villainous expression, and bloodshot eyes which appeared to leer in different directions... Such was the appearance of Badjoo, who on later acquaintance proved to be a superannuated pirate belonging to a tribe living mainly in the Sulu Sea, whose occupations were coral fishing and piracy.

"We were at length admitted to a spacious courtyard planted with trees and surrounded by buildings of various descriptions... My conductor led me across the yard to an open hall which was evidently a dining room; it was illuminated by a dim lamp and had a billiard-table at one end. Having beckoned me to be seated he departed.

"Presently a gentleman... entered with a brisk step, and with sailor like frankness holding out his hand, asked me in English my business. I handed him my letter of introduction and while he was reading it had time to observe this remarkable man. The light hair and blue eyes showed his Scandinavian origin, there was kindness but also determination and daring marked in his features, a short, well-knit frame showed great physical strength, and his bearing was that of a man accustomed to command... Two black and white Dalmatian hounds followed at his heels, scanning the nocturnal intruder suspiciously.

"Having quickly acquainted himself with the contents of the letter he gave me a most cordial welcome, and speaking in Danish hoped that I would make his house my home. A long conversation

followed, and it was not until the small hours of the morning that we retired to rest. Such was my first introduction to my future chief."

This then was the man who welcomed Helms on that first evening, and Helms was to find the time he spent in Lange's service invaluable to him later on. For it was in Bali that he acquired his first knowledge of the East, its peoples, languages and methods of trading, and laid the foundations for his later work.

Bali was said by Helms to be at that time the most thickly populated and also the most productive of the East Indian islands. He described the wonderful vegetation, and the rich soil so intensively cultivated that not a patch of untilled land was to be seen. Slight shocks of earthquake were frequent. Three years earlier Gunung Agung had erupted and the crater was still smoking.*

* Gunung Agung slumbered on uneasily, with only minor disturbances, for over a hundred years after Helms first saw it. Then, in March 1963 it erupted with fearful violence, spreading death and destruction over a wide area and making much of the surrounding countryside uninhabitable.

A glance at the map of Bali shows it to be triangular in shape. In the south-east corner is a peninsula, and on the narrow neck of land joining it to the mainland stood Lange's establishment, a favourable position, since it gave him a beach on either side, to be used alternately, according to the prevailing monsoon. Here he organised a large and thriving trade:

"Ships carrying the flags of many nations might be seen loading the various island products. These were either bought in the establishment from natives who carried them thither, or were sent by Chinese traders and agents employed on the coast. For the purpose of collecting produce, Mr. Lange owned several schooners which he sent round the islands, Sumbava, Flores, the Moluccas and others... I soon found myself deep in work which, though novel and interesting, taxed my energies to the utmost."

One reason for this was that Lange, probably influenced by the Balinese mistrust of foreigners, had an objection to employing

Europeans ashore, though he had many afloat. As a result his staff was absurdly small for the amount of business on which he was engaged, and Helms was a good deal surprised when he had been at Kuta only a short time and knew but little of the language, to find large responsibilities thrown upon him.

An interesting sidelight on trading conditions at the time is that as the islands had no currency of their own it was necessary to import some kind of coinage for day to day transactions. A certain amount of copper coins, minted in Singapore and brought in by ships, circulated; but the preferred method of payment, at anyrate in Badong, was in Chinese cash. Lange, owing to his trade connections with China, was able to buy these by weight and ship them, at a rate of 1400 to the silver (Straits) dollar, while in Bali their value was roughly twice the amount. (Nielsen.) Helms wrote that on arrival at Kuta they were put on strings, 200 on each, and used as a medium of payment at the Bali price of 700 to the dollar. Women did the work of stringing, under supervision. No doubt a profit accrued to Lange over the transaction, but the prices he gave were always kept stable, "so many measures, so many pice," and they seldom varied for the staple products, such as rice and coffee, whatever might be the state of the European markets or the fluctuations in other places.

Early each morning Helms rode down to the beach where the boats were kept and boatmen waited to load them with produce for shipment. Having arranged the day's work he returned for breakfast, to find that meanwhile:

"... strings of ponies had been converging from different parts of the country, each carrying four baskets filled with produce. Each little caravan was attended by the owner, usually a woman. Measuring, weighing and packing went on rapidly, and long rows of carts carried bags, bales and casks to the sea-shore. It was part

of my duty to inspect and receive the purchases made by Chinese agents, both in the village and on the coast... Altogether... I often felt thankful enough when evening came, to join the party, at times a large one, which assembled round Mr. Lange's hospitable table."

These parties had a cosmopolitan flavour. Lange's brother Hans was with him, the head clerk was an Englishman, and there was a resident English doctor, Dr. Hanson, who had acquired great fame amongst the Balinese for his skill and kindness. Now and then a Dutch warship would appear, bringing a large and lively party of Dutch officials from Java, who, together with the naval officers, would be the guests of the evening. Sometimes scientific men, naturalists and others, would pay Lange a visit, and there were the ships' captains and supercargoes. All were made welcome:

"Wonderful indeed were the tales told around that table... Together with the songs which usually followed at a later stage, they caused the evening to pass harmoniously and pleasantly... It was, in a manner, compulsory for everyone to oblige with a song... and so, in half the languages of Europe, in comic, gay or doleful strains, the melodies went round. A game of billiards usually terminated the evening, but I seldom waited until the end. A long day's incessant work, to begin again upon the morrow, predisposed me to early hours."

Sometimes Rajah Kassiman paid them a visit, and sometimes they returned these calls, the royal palace being some three hours ride distant. Helms described one such expedition in some detail.

They were met as they approached by "the heir-apparent of Badong, riding a small, pretty black horse, and accompanied by a party of Balinese spearmen." The young prince was slight and delicate looking, fair-complexioned, and his hair, as that of all the princes, was long, and twisted on the top of the head into a knot, in which was stuck a red hibiscus. "He received us as cordially as princely reserve would permit, and returned with us to the palace."

The royal dwelling was a succession of courts containing open,

square buildings in which the retainers lounged, often passing the time in cock-fighting and the gambling connected with it, though they sometimes amused themselves "by reading old palmyra leaves on which stories and legends were scratched." The innermost courts contained the Rajah's private apartments and those of his wives. The interiors were quite bare, the only ornamentation consisting of numerous china plates affixed to the walls:

"To such a place the prince conducted us, where the jovial old Rajah gave us a cordial welcome and escorted us to inspect his armoury, of which he was very proud. It consisted mainly of a long row of Balinese spears, and of antiquated rifles, some of which it might have been dangerous to fire. But all were bright and made a very good show...."

A feast followed, and the entertainment continued until late into the night with a display of the miming dances for which Bali is famous, accompanied by a gamelan orchestra.

Helms gave detailed descriptions of the dances, both beautiful and grotesque, which since his day have become familiar to many Europeans, tourists and others. But he saw one sight which no tourist ever saw, namely a suttee. This rite was, at that time, still practised in Bali, and on the death of the Rajah of the neighbouring state of Gianjar in December 1847, three of his wives sacrificed themselves in the flames, watched by hundreds of Balinese for whom, says Helms, "... it was a great day... It was some years since they had had the chance of witnessing one of these awful spectacles, a spectacle that meant for them a holiday with an odour of sanctity about it." All the reigning Rajahs of the island made a point of being present, either in person or by proxy, and:

"... along the soft and slippery paths formed by the embankments which divided the lawn-like terraces of the endless succession of paddy-fields, groups of Balinese in festive attire could be seen wending their way to the place of burning. Their gay dresses stood out in bright relief against the tender green of the ground over which they passed. They looked... rather like a kindly, festive

crowd, bent upon some pleasant excursion."

There follows a description of the preparations made for the burning. A gaudy structure with gilded roof, rising on crimson pillars and resting upon a platform of brickwork and a second platform covered with sand, had been erected in the centre of an open space surrounded by a wooden railing, in front of the Rajah's kraton (palace.) On the upper platform stood the wooden image of a lion, gorgeous in purple and gold trappings, the back of which opened to receive the body for cremation.*

* A recent writer, describing a cremation ceremony in Bali today, states that corpses of the four castes are still placed within carved wooden images for burning: "Brahman bones in the sacred cow, Kshatriya bones in a winged lion, Vaisya bones in a deer, and Sudra bones in a fish." (Reba Lewis: Indonesia; Troubled Paradise, p.150.)

Immediately surrounding this structure was a square space within a wall some four feet high, filled with a fierce, bright fire, "the fatal fire which was to consume the victims." Some twenty feet above and to the side of it was a light bamboo platform, covered with green leaves to protect it from the heat, and in the centre of this was a small pavilion. The spectators, many thousands in number, filled the space between this structure and the outer barrier, and "all eyes were directed towards the kraton whence the funeral procession was to come." The dead ruler did not leave his palace for the last time by the usual entrance, for a corpse was considered impure and nothing impure might pass the gateway. Hence a kind of bridge had been constructed across the outer wall, and across this the body was lifted onto the uppermost story of an immense tower of pagoda shape, where it was placed, covered with white linen and guarded by men carrying fans.

This tower was borne and attended by several hundred men. It had eleven tiers besides three lower platforms, the whole being

richly ornamented. A great procession marched before it; lance-bearers, musicians, men and women carrying offerings of weapons, clothing and ornaments, gold and silver vessels containing holy water, boiled rice and fruit of any colours, and finally the horse of the deceased, gaily caparisoned. The newly succeeded Rajah followed with a large suite, and then the Pandita (Sanskrit = one learned in religion,) the Brahman High Priest, carried upon a seat round which was wrapped one end of a coil of cloth made to represent a huge serpent, painted in white, black and gold stripes. The head of the monster rested under the seat while the tail was fastened to the tower which came immediately after it, implying that the body was being dragged to the place of burning by the reptile:

"Following the large tower of the dead Rajah came three minor and less elaborate ones, each containing a young woman about to become a sacrifice. The victims... showed no sign of fear... Dressed in white, their long black hair partly concealing them, with a mirror in one hand and a comb in the other, they appeared intent only upon adorning themselves as though for some gay festival. The courage which sustained them in a position so awful was indeed extraordinary, but it was born of the hope of happiness in a future world... Round them stood their relatives and friends; even these did not view the ghastly preparations with dismay, or try to save their daughters and sisters from the terrible death awaiting them. Their duty was not to save but to act as executioners; for they were entrusted with the last horrible preparations and finally sent the victims to their doom."

The procession moved slowly on, but before reaching its destination a strange act in the drama had to be performed. The serpent had to be killed and burned with the corpse. The High Priest descended from his seat, took up a bow, and from the four points of the compass discharged four wooden arrows at the serpent's head. It was not the arrows which struck it, however, but four tjempaka flowers, one at the feathered end of each. They detached themselves in flight, and by some strange dexterity he so

managed that each flower hit its mark. The reptile was then supposed to have been killed, and its body, hitherto carried by men, was now wound round the Pandita's chair and eventually round the wooden lion.

Having arrived at the place of cremation the tower was turned three times, the priest being always at its head. Finally it was placed against a bridge connected with the platform on which stood the lion, within which the body was now placed:

"Five small plates of gold, silver, copper, iron and lead,*

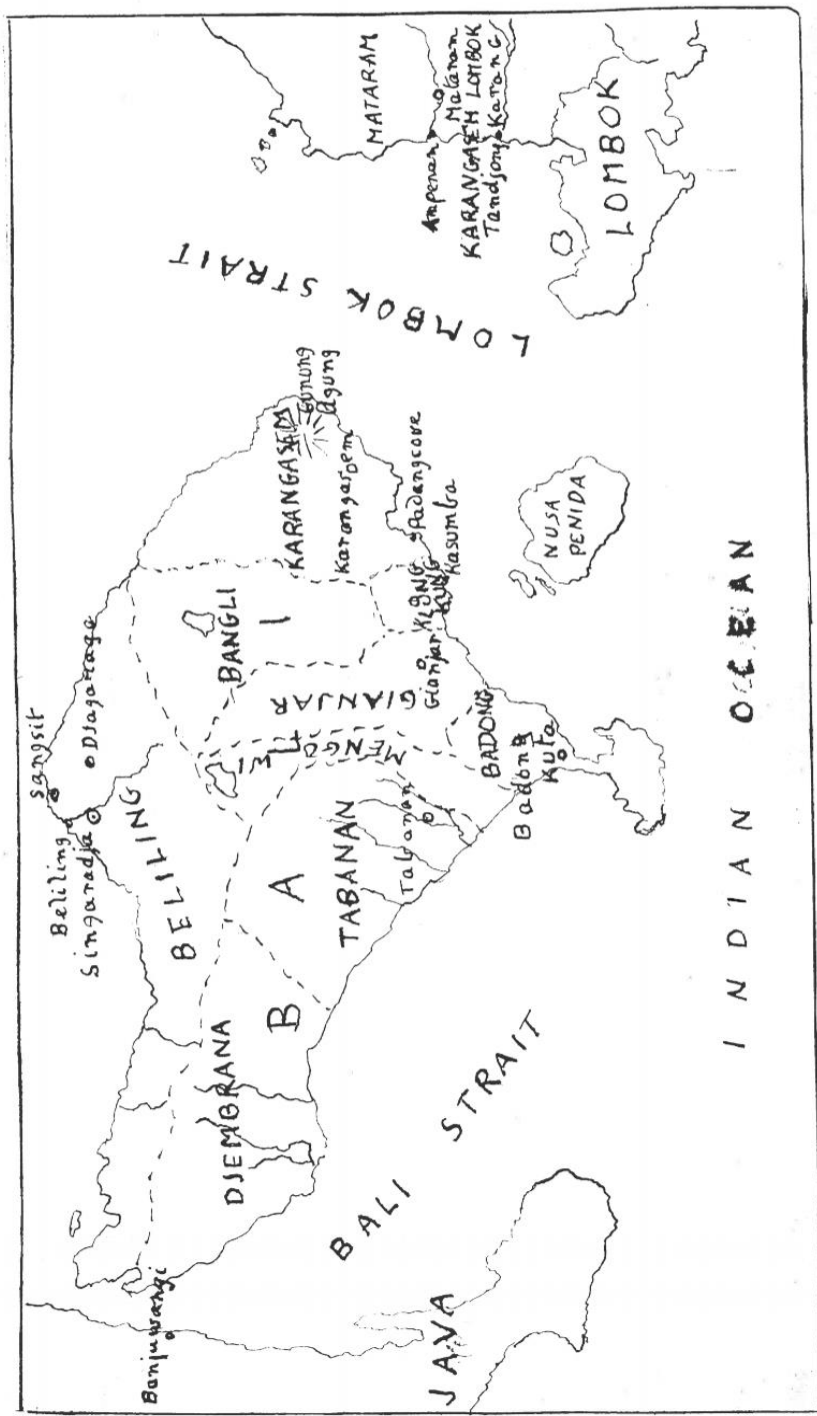
* In the system of astrological thought these metals are ruled by the Sun, Moon, Venus, Mars and Saturn respectively.

inscribed with mystic words, were placed in the mouth of the corpse, the Pandita read the Vedas and emptied the jars of holy water over the body. This done faggots, the sticks striped in gold, black and white, were placed under the lion, which was soon enveloped in flames. This part of the strange scene over the more terrible one began.

"The women were carried in procession three times round the space, and then lifted onto the fatal bridge. There, in the pavilion already mentioned... they waited till the flames had consumed the lion and its contents. Still they showed no fear, still their chief care seemed to be the adornment of the body, as though making ready for life rather than for death. Meanwhile the attendant relatives prepared for the horrible climax. The rail at the further end of the bridge was opened and a plank pushed out over the flames, while attendants below poured quantities of oil on the fire, causing bright and lurid flames to shoot up to a great height. The supreme moment had arrived. With firm and measured steps the victims trod the fatal plank; three times they brought their hands together over their heads, on each of which a small dove was placed, and then, with body erect, they leaped into the flaming sea before them, while the doves flew up, symbolising the escaping spirits.

"Two of the women showed, even at the very last, no sign of fear; they looked at each other to see whether both were prepared and then took the plunge... The third appeared to hesitate and to take the leap with less resolution; she faltered for an instant and then followed, all three disappearing without uttering a sound.

"This terrible sight did not appear to produce any emotion upon the vast crowd, and the scene closed with barbaric music and the firing of guns. But it was one which I never forgot...."



Sketch map of the island of Bali as Helms knew it, showing the native kingdoms. Based on Aage Krarup Nielsen's map in Mads Lange til Bali.

Chapter Four

Bali, June 1848 - June 1849

So passed the first year of Helms' stay in Bali. Of the second he had not so much to tell. Already coming events were casting their shadows before; events which were, in the end, to bring slow destruction to the aims and ideals of his chief, and to alter the course of his own life.

In the spring of 1848 Holland planned a still larger expeditionary force, to give the Balinese the lesson which, from the Dutch point of view, they had most decidedly not learned. Not one of the terms of the treaty of the previous year had been carried out. No indemnity had been paid, no fortifications had been levelled, and more had been made. Nor had the Beliling garrison been provisioned. On the contrary Gusti Djilantek forbade any of his followers under pain of death either to give or to sell them anything whatsoever, and the men began to desert, being kindly received by the local population. Furthermore, two ships, one British the other Dutch, had stranded and been taken possession of by the Rajahs in the usual way. An ultimatum was therefore sent once more. This time it went not only to the Rajahs of Beliling and Karangasem, but also to the Dewa Agung of Klung Kung, a move which in itself made the situation more serious, on account of the peculiar position of that ruler. Among other demands the surrender of Gusti Djilantek was called for. The Balinese rejected the terms and prepared for the worst. They built fortifications, forged weapons, and called every available man to arms, their base of operations being the little town of Djaragara, to which they had

retreated in 1846. But thanks to Lange's influence the kingdoms of Badong and Tabanan remained, if not friendly to the Dutch, at least neutral.

In the first week of May a powerful Dutch fleet assembled off Sangsit, on the north coast. Lange's Venus was one vessel watching operations, and there was also a white-painted brig flying the British flag. Dr. Greiner, medical officer of the Dutch ship Argo, who served in the Dutch East Indies for 25 years, left an interesting account of this campaign. He mentioned that once more King had come on behalf of the 'Rajah of Lombok' (Mataram,) to offer help against the Balinese, but that the offer was again refused. He described King as being at that time a man of about 55, full of life and speaking good French, which language he was fond of using. But obviously, if one may judge from Helms' description of the King establishment in the previous year, trade on Lombok was not going as well as formerly; thanks to Lange's exertions Bali was now ahead.

On May 7 and 8 the Dutch troops landed under covering fire and began their advance into the interior. On the first day they met with only slight resistance and thought their task would be easy. Thus lured they advanced into the terrain which had been prepared for their reception. They captured one fort, but the second was commanded by Gusti Djilantek himself, and Dutch accounts give to him the credit for the outcome of the battle which followed. To cut the story short, the Dutch, who had attacked with every hope of victory, found themselves compelled to go over to the defensive and at last to retreat to Sangsit, harassed continually by the Balinese. Their final losses were given as 256 dead and wounded, including fourteen officers, and next morning the rest of the force was withdrawn to the ships, and it was decided to return to Java

for the present. This time the Balinese had settled the matter for themselves, writes Nielsen; there was no need for Lange's mediating influence, and he returned in the Venus to his activities at Kuta.

From the Dutch point of view the situation obviously could not rest where it was without a serious loss of prestige, and therefore, after a year's uneasy lull, a third expeditionary force was mounted in the spring of 1849. This time it was of more than twice the strength, and under the command of one of Holland's most able and experienced leaders General Michiels.

On April 4 7000 men were landed, and the General set up his headquarters in the deserted palace of the Rajah of Beliling at Singaradja. The Balinese scarcely opposed the landing, relying, as in the previous year, on the strength of their positions in the interior.

The Rajahs sent an envoy to General Michiels asking for a meeting. He replied that he would treat only with them and Gusti Djilantek in person, and that the meeting must be soon, otherwise the country already occupied would be forfeit. To an enquiry how strong a bodyguard the Rajahs might bring, he answered that they could bring as many men as they wished. This they took literally, and the result was one of the strangest scenes in the history of the East Indies.

The Dutch troops were drawn up in parade formation along the road by which the Rajahs and their following were expected to arrive, with the artillery in a semi-circle at the end, and the officers assembled round their General. The aim was to show as imposing a front as possible, but in this the Balinese were not behindhand, as Nielsen remarks.

Soon after midday there were already some thousands of

Balinese warriors in the town, there was still no end to the marching men, and the Dutch began to fear some trap which would lead to appalling bloodshed. However, the Rajah of Karangasem duly arrived, with Gusti Djilantek, by which time there were some 12,000 Balinese assembled, in brilliant war apparel, and armed with long lances which were, however, sheathed. They also brought some 1500 guns of all types, among them many of those which the Dutch had lost in the previous campaigns. Over their army flew their large yellow flag, inscribed with black characters.

The opposing forces were drawn up opposite each other, only separated by the width of the roadway. The bearing of both was exemplary, and those on either side who could speak Malay talked to each other in friendly fashion; everything went without a hitch.

Captain Weitzel of the Dutch Army, who took part in both campaigns, described this grandiose scene, and gave a description of the Balinese leaders. Of the Rajah he wrote that he was a man of about thirty, his features showing noble descent, but no great strength of character; of Gusti Djilantek that he was a dashing, lively, good-looking fellow, his expression denoting both will and fortitude. Both were clad in red jackets with gold and diamond buttons, and were bare-legged, with short white trousers. Each had a valuable kris stuck in his gold belt, and the hair of each was bound with a strip of white linen, in the Rajah's a green branch, in that of the Chief Minister a red flower. They marched into the palace accompanied by 400 armed men; the Rajah took his place on a chair opposite General Michiels, and his following sat on the ground around him. On enquiry as to why the Rajah of Baliling had not come to the meeting as requested, Gusti Djilantek explained that it was because of his great age and frailty. In reality it was due to the superstition that misfortune would overtake the ruler

who should set foot in his kraton after an enemy had occupied it.

The Dutch now put forward their conditions. These were: unconditional recognition of the supremacy of Holland, and the sending of an ambassador of high ranking to the Governor General in Batavia with a letter confirming this; the surrender of Djagaraga and destruction of its fortifications, to begin at once; and the surrender of all deserters and captured weapons. In return the surrender of Gusti Djilantek was no longer demanded, nor the payment of an indemnity.

These conditions were accepted, and the General intimated that he would move his headquarters to Sangsit, from whence Djagaraga could more easily be reached, and that he would receive the Rajahs there to arrange for the surrender of the fortress.

This ended the meeting and the Balinese marched away in the same order in which they had come. But before the meeting at Sangsit took place on April 13, a change came over them. Their leaders arrived once more with a strongly armed following, and this time the lances were unsheathed, a sign of enmity. This the Dutch did not realise, but it was not long before it became apparent that the Balinese had decided to resist. So that when the Dutch advanced on Djagaraga according to plan, they found that the fortifications had been strengthened and all bridges cut.

This time, however, they had better luck. Although it proved impossible to take the positions by frontal assault, a party of troops made an encircling movement and attacked the defenders from the rear. After a short, fierce battle, the Balinese withdrew, and the two Rajahs and Gusti Djilantek fled into the mountainous country of the interior, and reached Karangasem. The Dutch were left in possession of the kingdom of Beliling, and prepared to find a man of princely descent to place on the throne. But Bali was

still far from being subdued, and they decided to move the whole of their forces round by sea to the east coast, in order to attack Karangasem and Klung Kung.

Meanwhile, in Badong, Lange's efforts had been directed towards keeping the two southern kingdoms neutral. As he saw it, it was of the utmost importance that there should be a force in reserve which might, at a favourable moment, be able to throw its influence onto the side of peace, and thus spare the island more devastation and bloodshed.

Helms described life at Kuta during this period as follows:

"The conditions of my daily work were much disturbed... The greater part of the coast was blockaded by the Dutch, the natives were in arms and we had to be on our guard against surprises, to turn our attention less to trade and more to arms, to drill our men and to keep night watches."

He furthermore stated that:

"... Rajah Kassiman had made an attack on an old enemy of his, the Rajah of the neighbouring state of Mengowi, but this failed... and his men were severely beaten. This raised the excitement around us to a great pitch, for a counter-attack was expected every moment."

The warehouses were full of goods of different kinds and were therefore:

"... much coveted by the enemy and an attack was actually threatened. We prepared for defence to the best of our ability, brought guns from our saluting battery by the seashore within our walls, and, as far as we could, made ready for the enemy."

At this moment, for the third time, an offer of help from the Rajah of Mataram was made to the Dutch, and this time it was accepted. It was arranged that Dutch transport should ferry 4000 fighting men across from Lombok and land then in Karangasem. Meanwhile the main Dutch force assembled off the south-east coast and captured the little town of Padang Cove. A week later the Lombok troops landed in Karangasem where, at the same time, a revolt broke out. The Rajah, seeing his situation as hopeless,

killed his wives and children and then himself. His brother, with Gusti Djilantek, fled to the mountains, hotly pursued.

The Dutch now turned their attention to Klung Kung, kingdom of the sacred ruler. Here also, as formerly in Karangasem-Lombok, the soul of the resistance was a woman, the Dewa Agung's sister, Agung Istri, who cherished an implacable hatred of the Dutch. Under her orders the defence of Klung Kung was organised, and her faithful supporter and helper was the Rajah of the southern kingdom of Gianjar.

The Dutch troops began their advance, and in spite of frenzied resistance they captured first an ancient and holy temple round which the Balinese had taken up positions, and then the town of Kassumba. This threatened the person of the sacred ruler himself, and the night after the capture the Balinese made a surprise attack on the Dutch camp. In this General Michiels was severely wounded, and died on board ship the following day after the amputation of a leg. So perished this gallant officer and his death much depressed the troops. The command was taken over by Colonel van Swieten. There was exhaustion and much sickness among the men, and because of the difficulty of maintaining communications with the coast it was decided to return to Padang Cove to await further orders from Batavia, and to rest the army for a time.

Soon afterwards the leader of the Lombok force arrived, bringing with him three krises, those of the two Rajahs and of Gusti Djilantek. These he presented to Colonel van Swieten, as proof that all three men were dead. The Lombok fighters had overtaken the two fugitives; the Rajah of Beliling was killed and Gusti Djilantek had taken poison, seeing no other way out. In this tragic manner died Holland's most bitter and dangerous enemy, the courageous champion of Balinese freedom. Only seven weeks had

elapsed since the meeting at Singaradja, and the leaders who had taken part in it were all three dead.

In Kuta, while Helms and the rest of the staff worked on the defences, Lange was now exerting the utmost diplomacy of which he was capable to bring about a cessation of hostilities. He succeeded in persuading Rajah Kassiman and the Rajah of Tabanan to try and exert their influence over the Dewa Agung. With Lange and an army of some 16,000 the two Rajahs marched up to Klung Kung, where the Rajah of Gianjar and other rulers were assembled, ready to fight to the last for the man who embodied the ancient dynasty of Madjahapit.

It can be seen that Lange was in a terribly difficult position. He went to Klung Kung with two Rajahs who were his personal friends, and not unfriendly towards the Dutch, but whose warriors would most certainly feel themselves in their hearts to be on the Balinese side, and who would wish to defend the island's supreme ruler against the foreign invader. And the Dewa Agung had the right to ask for, indeed to command, the help of the two southern Rajahs and their men. Add to this the fact that the Balinese knew that the Dutch army had retreated to the coast in rather poor shape. In other words, the situation was favourable for a defensive campaign.

To quote Nielsen, there was:

"... something rather grand and strange about Mads Lange in this situation. The sailor from Rudkøbing, quite alone, the only European amongst thousands of warlike and excited natives, negotiating quietly and calmly with the assembled princes of the ancient Hindu dynasties; the sailor who, moreover, was himself a member of the white race which was now threatening to wipe them out, and who was Dutch agent in Bali."

It would not have been surprising had the kris of some fanatical Balinese struck him down. Yet, although so many factors

were against him, such was the force of his personality that he won the victory, persuaded them to negotiate, and yet kept their trust and their friendship.

While all this was going on Helms had been entrusted with a mission to Dutch army headquarters, and embarked in the Venus for Padang Cove, taking with him a letter from Lange explaining what he was trying to do. He was courteously received, but found the Dutch camp:

"... in a somewhat dejected state. The Commander had been killed, with many officers and men... one fourth of the remaining men were ill with dysentery, and they had the pleasure of knowing that 30,000 Balinese were ready to attack them."

The hostile Rajahs had sent discourteous answers to Colonel van Swieten's offer of safe conduct to a conference, and he doubted Lange's ability to intervene effectively. Also, if the whole expedition was not to end ignominiously it was necessary for his army to make an attempt to reach Klung Kung soon, especially as with each day the monsoon was approaching, when it would be impossible for the fleet to lie off the coast. He therefore ordered a return to Kassumba and on June 10 began an advance from there.

"Almost in a moment, however, the aspect of things totally changed. The advancing soldiers, after two hours' march, suddenly found themselves confronted by a party led by a European. It was Mr. Lange, who brought them the welcome tidings of a peaceful solution." (Helms.)

But Lange warned Colonel van Swieten at the same time, that should the Dutch continue their advance he would be unable to answer for the conduct of the men from Badong and Tabanan, who had supported him in his plea for peace, but who would regard any attack on the sacred person of the Dewa Agung as cause for a holy war.

Lange returned to Klung Kung immediately with a Dutch envoy. It was arranged that the condition of an armistice should be, as

before, the recognition of Holland's sovereignty over Bali; all other details were to await a later conference.

A few days later the newly appointed Commander in Chief for the Netherlands Indies, Duke Bernard of Sachs-Weimar Eisenach, a German prince in Dutch service, arrived in the island. When the Rajahs heard that a genuine European prince of the blood was expected, they were most interested and intimated their wish to see him. The Dutch arranged an imposing spectacle, assurances of peace and goodwill were exchanged, Rajah Kassiman expressed his satisfaction that Klung Kung had not been approached, and himself guaranteed the peaceful intentions of Dewa Agung. This ended the Duke's mission, and in five day's time the Dutch fleet left with all troops on board, including the remnants of the occupation force which had been left in north Bali.

It remained to conclude a peace treaty, and it was decided that the negotiations should begin on July 5 at Mads Lange's 'palace' at Kuta, with Colonel van Swieten as Dutch representative. There Lange entertained the Rajahs and their following. This lavish hospitality, which was typical of him, cost him dear. Nielsen says that when they left there was not so much as one grain of rice left in his storerooms, and it looked as though a plague of locusts had passed over the land.

Besides the recognition of Dutch sovereignty the treaty concluded stipulated that the Balinese should not cede territory to any other power, and should support the Dutch in case of war. Rules were also made governing the procedure regarding stranded ships, and for the suppression of piracy. On the other hand no oaths of allegiance were asked from the Rajahs, nor yearly tribute of any kind, and the Dutch undertook not to interfere in the island's internal affairs. Helms summed up the settlement thus:

"It was not a very glorious termination for the Dutch. But that they were able to withdraw at all without discredit they owed entirely to Mr. Lange. Yet he, on his side, had little reason to feel grateful towards them. They made him a Knight of the Netherlands Lion, but his business never recovered. The protracted blockade which they had maintained during their languid operations had destroyed the trade of the island."

It was this fact which decided Helms to leave Bali and start on further adventures which, some three years later, were to take him to Sarawak. He wrote:

"I had looked forward to an independent position in the island at some future time, and Mr. Lange pointed out that even if the Dutch succeeded in conquering Bali it would benefit me, as it would entitle me to full citizenship in the Dutch possessions in the East, which brought many advantages, but to obtain which involved qualifications jealously insisted upon. But the island was not conquered, whereas trade had been disorganised, and the experience which the war had given the Balinese of contact with Europeans had made them more averse than ever to admitting them to the country. The prolonged commercial inactivity had not only taken away occupation, but had caused me to tire of the country. My health also had suffered greatly from fever, and so, after much consideration I determined to go to China for a change."

He therefore left for Singapore in one of Lange's brigs, and there transferred to an American ship for Hongkong. He had been invited there by Captain Burd, Lange's former partner. The association had been dissolved, but commercial transactions were still carried on between them.

He was, as will be seen, to visit Kuta once more, nine years later, but by that time things had changed out of all recognition and his old chief was dead. Lange's position never really recovered. The long drawn-out hostilities kept all Balinese capable of bearing arms constantly on the alert, with the result that the plantations were neglected, the oil-mill which he had imported from Europe at considerable expense lay idle for want of nuts, and instead of a surplus of produce for export there was not enough for the island's own inhabitants. At one time things became so serious

that even old Rajah Kassiman had not enough rice for his own household, and had to buy from Lange who, in his turn, had to import from Lombok. Added to this the pattern of East Indian trade was slowly changing with the inexorable advance of steam navigation. The sailing ships, in order to compete, sailed increasingly to the large ports and no longer called as often at the smaller ones. All this brought year by year a gradual downward trend, and the same thing happened on Lombok, where King fought the same battle against forces beyond his control. Although he too had been made a Dutch agent, and although he had started a small shipbuilding yard, his enterprise seems to have diminished year by year. What was perhaps his last move in the long years of rivalry with Lange is mentioned in an article by Mr. Tom Harrisson in the Sarawak Museum Journal for July - December, 1963. This article, entitled A Rajah's Royal Rages, quotes a letter from Sir James Brooke, written in January 1852, which mentions that the Rajah of Mataram, in the island of Lombok, had written to Queen Victoria and sent her gifts, and that both letter and gifts were returned without acknowledgement to the sender by the Supreme Government of India. In this little incident we can see, I think, a final desperate effort made by King to interest England in the island. He was last heard of two years later, in 1854, but by 1856 he was no longer on Lombok and what was left of his business had passed into other hands. His fate is unknown.

Lange was not a man to give in easily. For the first few years after the war he fought energetically, helped by his brother, to bring back life into the undertaking, and they were joined by a nephew from Denmark, Christian Lange. But Mads could not adapt himself to the altered circumstances. Helms wrote:

"He was not one to retrieve his position by long-continued

thrift and prudence. There was more of the bold Viking than the prudent trader in his nature. He was a power in the country, and the Balinese feared, yet liked and admired him, and in truth, though severe, he was generous even to a fault, and loyal to his trust without thinking of the consequences to himself."

In the last few years of his life he left the establishment more and more in the hands of his brother and nephew, and sought peace in long trips in his little yacht. The sailor in him longed for the sea on which he had spent his youth. His health had suffered and he planned to set sail for Denmark, and made every preparation to do so, as is shown by a letter of farewell which he wrote to the Rajah of Tabanan. This letter, written on the leaf of a lontar palm, was taken back to Denmark together with other mementos and curios, and is now in the National Museum of Copenhagen, for it was never sent. Lange became suddenly ill, and died in a few days in May, 1856, at the age of forty-nine.

Not long after his death Christian Lange's betrothed, daughter of a Danish farmer, came out to Batavia, where they were married. She was the first European woman to live in Bali, and her arrival was greeted with a salute from the guns of the battery, while the Balinese came from far and near to see her. For Nielsen tells how the Rajah of Tabanan once asked an English captain who visited him with Lange, if he would bring a white woman with him on his next voyage, as he would much like to see such a being.

Hans Lange died not many years after his brother, but Christian kept up the struggle for a few years longer, and it was not until 1863 that he realised what was left of the business, and with his wife and son returned to Denmark.

It was many years before the Dutch were able completely to incorporate Bali in their colonial possessions, but one by one the

native kingdoms fell to them. The last three to succumb were, in 1906, Badong and Tabanan, the two which had been ruled by Lange's friends, and in which he had striven to build a bridge between East and West; and in 1908 they were followed by the sacred, mother-state of Klung Kung. The bloodshed attending the final scenes, involving once more the self-immolation of the rulers with their entire households, is described by Nielsen, who quotes Dutch sources.

Destiny works in strange ways. When Dr. Nielsen visited Bali in the twenties, all that remained of Lange's years of toil and effort was his grave, a few mouldering ruins lost in tropical vegetation where once his 'palace' and his warehouses had stood, and the road which he made from Kuta to the beaches. And yet his memory had been perpetuated in the East Indies in a way which he himself would never have guessed, and which held within it all the elements of romance. For by his Chinese wife he had one child, a daughter whom he named Cecilie. She, at the time of her father's death, was being educated at a convent school in Singapore. Later, at the age of twenty-two, she met Sultan Abu Bakar of Johore, who fell deeply in love with her and married her in spite of all opposition.*

And so Mads Lange's daughter became Sultana of Johore, and he is not yet forgotten, even though nothing remains of the enterprise to which he devoted so many years of his life.

* Two years after the publication of Mads Lange til Bali Dr. Nielsen was again in the East, and was received by the Dowager Sultana of Johore then a charming old lady in her eighties. An account of the interview appeared in the Copenhagen newspaper Politiken for 22 May, 1927.

Chapter Five

Interlude in California

Helms arrived in Hongkong in July. He was weak from the effects of fever when he left Bali, but the sea voyage and the change of diet soon put him right, and the cure was completed by some weeks of idleness. Those were the days of the merchant princes, who extended generous hospitality which was a boon to the traveller, as hotels were few and often non-existent. The time passed pleasantly enough, in spite of a general feeling of uneasiness among European residents, for the Governor of the Portuguese settlement of Macao had just been murdered in broad daylight while riding in the outskirts of the city. His head was carried off, probably to claim the reward which had, according to rumour, been placed upon it by terrorists. The coast also was infested by pirates who attacked all shipping, even European vessels were not safe. Helms made a trip to Canton in one of the fast sailing-boats which then provided communication between the two settlements, and it was necessary to have loaded rifles lying on deck ready for use at any moment.

At that time all the mercantile communities in the East were interested in developments in California. Barely three years earlier the territory had been an all but uninhabited waste, except around the missions established by the Spanish Franciscan monks. Overland immigration from the east only began on any scale in about 1840. At that time California was still under Mexican rule, but after various complicated political episodes it was formally ceded to America in 1848, just about the time that gold was discovered. The consequent rush to the Californian coast was the leading topic

of conversation at many social functions in Hongkong and elsewhere wrote Helms:

"I remember being at a party which must have left mournful recollections in the minds of many of the guests. It was given by two gentlemen of the legal profession who, though doing extremely well, yet wanted to do better, and induced by the exciting news which every incoming ship brought from California, determined to seek their fortune there. Many were the toasts invoking Plutus, god of riches, on their behalf, and the ship sailed. But she was never heard of again."

In September, Helms, once more fit and full of energy, accepted the offer of a clerkship in the office of MacEwen & Co., of Singapore, and returned thither in the opium clipper Sydney, a schooner which, on this occasion, proved anything but a clipper, for they had the monsoon against them and were twenty-eight days on the way. Moreover he was nearly eaten alive by cockroaches which at night blackened the walls of the cabin.

In Singapore he found the same interest being taken in California. The volume of immigration was said to be such that an almost unlimited market was open for a variety of goods. Two leading firms proposed to make trial shipments, and one of them was the German firm to which he had had his original introduction from Hamburg. The partners suggested that he should make the trip on their behalf and report on the possibilities; should prospects seem favourable a career might be opened for him there as their agent. MacEwen & Co. offered to keep his job in Singapore open meanwhile. Helms was never able to resist an adventure. In spite of the fate of the two gentlemen of Hongkong he gladly accepted the proposition, and June 7, 1850, found him once again sailing east this time to reach the Far West.

Once more his course was up the China Sea, first as far north as to sight some small Japanese islands, then eastwards into the

steady, gentle breezes, and smooth seas of the Pacific.

"The ship ploughed her way towards El Dorado without our touching rope or sail, and it was not till nine weeks had passed that dense fogs warned us that we were approaching our goal. Now also the sea became alive with creatures; seals, sea-lions and whales in great numbers."

On the sixty-seventh day, going under easy canvas, they suddenly saw through the mist a high, rocky coast, in which opened a narrow inlet. This was the Golden Gate, and before long they found themselves in one of the finest harbours of the world:

"... this perfectly land-locked sea might hold the navies of the world, and a goodly fleet was here now. There were more than seven hundred ships and coasters, many of them abandoned by their crews, some of them wrecks. Our Captain exacted a promise from his men, in consideration of certain engagements on his part, not to desert their ship. There were twenty-two of them, but only eight or nine kept their word in the end; the temptations, and the intimidation practised by crimps from the shore were too much for them. These even threatened the Captain's life if he put hindrances in the way. One old and grey-haired man, master of a large Dutch ship lying close by, was tied to the mast and flogged for trying to enforce discipline. It was a curious state of things; where but a short time since a wilderness had been, a great town was fast rising."

By a strange coincidence when in Russia more than a quarter of a century later Helms happened to call upon an official of high rank whom he wrote of as "His Excellency G..." This man had, in earlier days, been an officer in the Imperial Russian Navy, and in 1827 was in the Pacific. The conversation turned upon California, and he told Helms that having been in that year in "Vancouver's Land," a Swiss adventurer had asked for and obtained a passage in his ship, which subsequently called at the small early settlement of San Francisco. A party of ship's officers, accompanied by this man, went on a trip up the Sacramento River, and the Swiss requested to be left behind. He was Johann Sutter.* He put up a saw-mill, but this failing he took to farming. When some years later a water-wheel was being erected on his farm, the first

Californian gold was discovered.

* Known in Californian history as John A. Sutter. The actual discovery was made in January 1848 by a workman, James W. Marshall, a monument to whom now marks the spot.

From the deck of the ship San Francisco presented anything but a picturesque or inviting appearance. Although the natural harbour was magnificent the surrounding country appeared barren and sandy; the town was built upon a hilly waste and comprised a curious medley of wooden shanties, tents, and an occasional building which might be called a house.

Expectant and curious they pulled in shore with some difficulty, making their way between lines of shipping, rafts and boats laden with all kinds of goods. They walked ankle-deep in sand until, nearly blinded by dust, they reached the main road. It was thronged with a curious crowd; Europeans of every grade of society jostled each other, mostly weather-beaten and dirty, obviously fresh from the diggings. Some were hardy rough-looking men, well fitted to cope with the work and privations, others were more studious types, delicate-looking lads with glasses. And there were groups of fresh arrivals like themselves, spruce and tidy, looking on at the strange scene, repenting perhaps of their rash adventure, or perhaps plucking up courage to make a start. Mixed with these were Chinese, Mexicans, Indians and many other nationalities, and a few uniformed American officials looking strangely out of place, for a glance showed that order and authority were hardly to be expected in this topsy-turvy society.

All the streets, such as they were, were filled with merchandise. Here and there a crowd collected round an auctioneer who was selling off stock which yesterday would almost have brought its weight in gold but today was being all but thrown away. The

reduced value of money, with the consequent enormous cost of carriage, rent and storage, and every kind of labour, did not make it worth while for goods to be held by speculators, or to await demand. As a small illustration of the way in which business was done Helms tells how part of one cargo had consisted of a large quantity of rough, useful furniture, especially chests-of-drawers. These were soon disposed of by auction, but when the agent came to make up his accounts he found that the drawers had been filled with flannel shirts, corduroy trousers, blankets and many other things. So the purchasers obtained bargains, while the shippers lost heavily.

He described the Plaza or Grand Square, which was filled, like the other streets, with goods and building materials. Here was the famous Parker House, partly hotel, partly gambling establishment, as were the largest and best buildings in the town, though they did not always correspond to the imposing names which figured upon them, such as El Dorado, Alhambra, and others. Most of them were constructed of the roughest materials, but the interiors were given a gay appearance by a little gaudy paper-hanging and gilding, and a showy chandelier or two:

"There would be one or two bars, a few musicians, and a dozen or so monte-faro and rouge-et-noir tables. Day and night, week-days and Sundays, the crowd was always surging round these, and a wonderful study they presented.

"I watched one man, evidently a Spanish South American, steadily transferring his gold to the bank. He must have had five or six thousand gold eagles; a small pile was still left, he staked it all and lost without moving a muscle. With a shrug of the shoulders and a half-suppressed laugh he retired, had a conversation with a friend, apparently borrowed money and was soon seen at another table. He was evidently too hardened to show his emotions. But the ordinary miner too, elated with success and suddenly possessed of unwonted wealth, staked his gold recklessly, unconscious that the professional gambler with keen eye was

watching his prey. Many a knife and revolver were drawn by infuriated victims, though as a rule members of the Vigilance Committee were at hand and bloodshed was prevented."

Further from the centre of the town less pretentious buildings catered for lodgings; wooden shanties with their walls covered with bunks; ships' cabooses; even packing-cases did service, and Helms remarked that these, when filled with dry straw, were by no means the worst.

He himself did not experience the most trying discomforts, for he had become a member of a kind of bachelors' hall:

"... There were, I think, twenty-two of us, with one servant who acted as cook and man-of-all-work.

"It was a curious and a cosmopolitan party, comprising literary, business and professional men... One, an acquaintance of mine from the East, had been buying land and so-called water-lots... Had I been in a position to buy I should, in all probability, have become a Croesus. Whether he stuck to his I never learned.

"It was a keen, desperate struggle for wealth, and not altogether a pleasant atmosphere, but in the assembly to which I belonged, there was at anyrate one night in the week when hearts unbent and gold was not the all absorbing topic. These evenings generally wound up by the whole company getting on their chairs and, with one foot on the table, singing For Auld Lang Syne. Few of us had soft couches on which to retire to rest, we lay wrapped in blankets on the floor, rats and fleas innumerable being our companions; cleanliness was a difficult matter... water was scarce and washing cost six dollars per dozen pieces... The streets, though a wooden pavement had been begun, were still, as a rule in deep soft sand, or equally deep mud; and at night they were unlighted and dangerous."

San Francisco being surrounded by sandhills there were no pleasant walks, but Helms took occasional rambles and amongst the places he visited were the old church and mission of Dolores:

"A strange contrast to the restless, ever-changing aspect of its surroundings was the desolate old church with the rude gothic arches, faded gilding, and indistinguishable portraits of monks and saints; a monument of the past, and of labours as arduous but more heroic than those of the crowd which now passed its walls, bent upon the search for wealth... The old Spanish barracks and fort at

Presidio were also in ruins; a few Castillian cannon and mortars, with the Castillian arms upon them, were the only witnesses that a mighty nation once ruled here."

Another place to which he was fond of going was Flagstaff Hill, on the outskirts of the town. From here a splendid view was obtained over town, harbour and surroundings, "a view which I thought it worth while to sketch."*

* This sketch is now in the possession of Helms' grandson, Verner W. Clapp, of Washington, D.C.

A fearful fire occurred during his stay, destroying the hopes of hundreds:

"... Yet the industry displayed was marvellous, and the builders worked almost as fast as the flames, and restored things to their former condition in an incredibly short time... I had undertaken to see our cargo landed and stored, an expensive process, as charges for boats and cartage were enormous; but our warehouse being built on piles in the shallow part of the shore so boats could come alongside. I had not been there for two days; on the third when I went down, instead of the usual sea view I found to my amazement a big warehouse in front of us, with such rapidity were buildings run up."

They had come to San Francisco at a very unfavourable time. The first rush had gone by and thousands had returned disheartened from the diggings. Supplies far in excess of demand or storage capacity had been crowding in from everywhere, and the consequence was that their ship, together with many others, came to a bad market.

Helms saw clearly that California had a great future before it, and he wrote to his Singapore friends telling them not to be discouraged by the reports which victims of dishonesty and the lawless condition of San Francisco were spreading abroad, which were "calculated to frighten away honest and legitimate trade." From accounts given of the interior it was clear that the desolate aspect of the country was confined to a narrow strip on the coast, and that not far off the land possessed other and more enduring

sources of wealth than gold. But the facts of the moment were too strong to be denied, and as he had no wish to try his luck in the diggings he arranged to return in the same ship.

They were ready to sail early in September, but their troubles were not yet over. The eight members of the crew who honoured their contract were not enough even to raise the anchor, and they had to send on shore for help. However, at last all was ready, and the tide quickly swept them out through the Golden Gate. "I thank my stars that I am once more master of my own ship," said the captain, as he looked back at the fading coastline; "you will never catch me in that accursed place again." But though he had got his ship safely out to sea she was dangerously undermanned, and worse was to come. Sickness broke out and the first officer died within a few days. The captain was seriously ill at the same time, and some of the crew were also suffering. Things began to look serious, and had bad weather come on there might have been disaster. But the Pacific lived up to its name. Helms took his turn at the helm, but, as he remarked: "It is no hardship to guide a ship before variable winds in fine weather." Gradually the invalids recovered; they crossed safely and reached first Hongkong, and then Singapore.

The Californian speculation had been disastrous; there was no question of further enterprise in that direction. But through the Singapore representative of the London firm of Messrs. R. & J. Henderson Helms was offered a post in Sarawak. This firm had taken the lease for working the antimony mines in the kingdom of the first White Rajah, Sir James Brooke, and they appointed Helms their agent. This post was to determine the principal work of his life, but some months had to pass before he could enter upon his duties, possibly in order that confirmation of his appointment might be obtained from London, and meanwhile two more adventures offered

themselves in the shape of journeys to Cambodia and to Siam.

Chapter Six

Cambodia

It is necessary at this point to glance briefly at conditions in Cambodia and Siam, in order to see why these two journeys presented themselves at that time.

Cambodia was then a tributary state of Siam, which also exercised suzerainty over the Malay states of Kedah, Kelantan and Trengganu. Political and commercial relations with Great Britain had been regulated by a treaty signed in June 1826, of which Captain Henry Burney, an English official in Penang, was the successful negotiator on the English side. Mutual trade became of some importance, many British ships being engaged in it. Due to intricate political happenings and, in the view of the European mercantile community, to the system of monopoly practised by the Siamese Government, this trade gradually dwindled. The merchants of Singapore continually made representations to the British Government, and at last induced it to send Sir James Brooke, (who had, at that time, already been in Sarawak for some eleven years, and also held the positions of Governor of Labuan and of Consul General of Borneo,) on a mission to Siam, to try either to revise the existing treaty or to conclude a new one. This mission arrived in Bangkok in August 1850, but it failed. Brooke reported that only with the death of King Rama III and the accession of his half-brother, Prince Mongkut, who was known to hold more modern views, would the situation be likely to improve.

British relations with Siam became strained. Mutual trade ceased entirely, and certain people in Singapore sent home

petitions urging coercive measures. This state of affairs was well understood not only in Siam herself, but in her tributary states, of which Cambodia was the most important, and the one which in the past had suffered most, for her geographical position between Siam, Cochin China and Vietnam, caused her inevitably to become the theatre both of actual combat and political struggle. Therefore King Ang Duang of Cambodia instructed his agent in Singapore to represent his situation and the resources of his country to the British authorities, and to express his desire to be on friendly terms with the English and to open commercial relations with them. An enterprising Singapore firm* resolved to put these assertions to a practical test by sending a ship and cargo, and this mission was entrusted to Helms.

* Most likely MacEwen & Co., Helms' employers at that time.

Formerly Cambodia had been approached up the great river Mekong. Large ships ascended that stream upwards of a hundred miles, to a point where several tributaries unite to form the one river which flows into the China Sea at Saigon. The Cochin Chinese had, however, closed this waterway; the only means of approach was from the Gulf of Siam, and the only port open to the Cambodians was the village of Kampot. Helms sailed accordingly for this place in February, 1851, having with him the King of Cambodia's agent, a man of Portuguese descent, Monteiro by name.

It proved more difficult to find Kampot than they had expected, for the Admiralty chart turned out to be incorrect. But in the end they anchored in a picturesque gulf bounded to the east by the coast of Cochin China, and to the north and west by the islands and mainland of Cambodia itself. Nothing could be seen of Kampot, as they had to anchor far out owing to shallow water.

The Gulf of Siam was infested by pirates, and Kampot, being

unvisited by European vessels, was suspected of being one of their chief haunts. In fact, many of the Rajahs in the Eastern Archipelago were more or less directly engaged in piracy, and since nothing was known of the King of Cambodia it was by no means sure that he would be an exception:

"But we had come by his invitation and he would expect this first visit in modern times of an English ship to result in important benefits to his country and himself, by the opening up of commercial relations with a British settlement. There was, therefore, every reason to expect that he would protect us, as far as his authority went; the question was how far did it go? However, we were merchant adventurers and had to take men upon trust, and so, getting into the ship's boat with my companion, we reached, after a couple of hours' sail, the mouth of the river upon which Kampot is built."

It was a narrow stream, the banks well wooded with magnificent trees, "in particular the species which is largely used by the Chinese as masts for their junks." But the village, when they reached it, turned out to be a miserable collection of thatched bamboo huts surrounded by filth and mud, and seemingly populated mainly by emaciated, opium-smoking Chinese.

Having obtained an interpreter Helms sent him to fetch some of the more respectable Chinese traders and gathered what information he could from them. An empty hut somewhat apart from the market-place was put at his disposal, and there he gave them particulars of the merchandise the ship had brought, and contracted for rice, sugar, raw silk, stick-lac, etc., which, in exchange for bales and cases of Manchester goods, were to be collected while he visited the King at his capital of Udong. The Governor arrived to pay a call, and had to be propitiated as he alone could provide the means of transport:

"After much delay and bargaining these were at last forthcoming; they were very crazy bullock-carts consisting of hoops covered with matting and resting on two wheels, of course without the vestige of a spring. In one of these funnel-shaped conveyances

I made my bed and so could travel in a reclining position."

The road at first crossed a marshy plain, and then entered forests with groves of bamboo, wild mango and various species of palms. Water was very scarce, there were no streams, and the ponds on which travellers were compelled to depend, were almost dry and contained only a thick, green, slimy substance, quite undrinkable. In the mud around them were the footprints of many wild creatures seeking water; elephants, rhinos, buffalo, wild boar and deer. As a rule there was little undergrowth and they could often see animals grazing in the distance, while in the trees above them were peacocks, parroquets, pigeons and other birds. There was therefore no lack of game for their meals, but they rarely had anything to drink except when they were able to quench their thirst with the delicious juice of the toddy-palm. The rice which they carried with them as their staple food had to be cooked, however repulsive this was, in the aforesaid slimy water.

Udong lies about 136 miles to the north-east of Kampot, but the distance by road was more nearly 200, and travelling was heavy and slow. The travellers did not exceed twenty miles a day and the carts constantly broke down, and had to be repaired with rattans or anything else that could be found in the forest. Human habitations were rare. They passed several Buddhist monasteries, but the yellow-robed monks had nothing to offer them. At night they formed the carts into a circle, putting the oxen in the centre and lighting fires all round to keep off the wild beasts.

On the fifth day they reached a village where they were to change their draught animals, but the people assured them that they had none. Monteiro however knew better; he had the headman put in the stocks, and the oxen were at once forthcoming. They learned here that a number of elephants had been sent by the King to meet them and expedite their journey, but had somehow missed them. At

the few villages they came to the people crowded round them; they appeared wretchedly poor. Though Helms had brought with him all sorts of tempting trifles with a view to barter, they could offer nothing. When on the evening of the tenth day the party reached its destination Helms and his companion were worn out after the tiring journey, and bruised and stiff all over.

They found Udong to be much the same kind of place as Kampot, only larger. It had been burned down so often in its troubled history that the people apparently thought it scarcely worth while to build anything more substantial than the usual thatched bamboo huts, and one of these was assigned to the travellers.

The King sent a message to invite their attendance, giving them at the same time a hint not to talk politics, as emissaries from Siam and Cochin China had arrived to enquire into the meaning of so unusual an occurrence as the presence of an English ship at Kampot.

King Ang Duang had ruled Cambodia for about three years. He had been placed on the throne by the King of Siam, to whom he had appealed for help against Vietnam. In the end he had been constrained by Siam to pay tribute to the Emperor of Vietnam as well as to King Rama III, so that he was not only the tributary of the one state but the vassal of the other, and might not leave the country without Siamese permission. Three of his sons, including the heir, were sent to serve in Bangkok for a time, where Helms made the acquaintance of the eldest son later on, and thought that "doubtless he and the country he might be called upon to rule would benefit by the teachings which the more advanced and settled condition of Siam could afford him."

At the appointed time Helms and Monteiro set out for the palace, which was in a large square surrounded by a wall, with

fortified gates on each of the four sides. Within this was a second wall protecting the palace itself, "an unpretentious wooden building of the same temporary character as the rest of the town."

"The King received us in audience with a rather poor attempt at regal state. There was a sort of throne, and the assembled pages and nobles were dressed in red, gold-laced coats, lying on their faces awaiting the monarch's arrival. I found that the proper head-covering for full dress was a hat resembling that worn by stage banditti, with a high, pointed peak, and a very broad brim, the hatband being replaced by a species of coronet. The early Portuguese navigators must, I think, have introduced these. Much importance seemed to be attached to them, and as most of them were in a very dilapidated condition anxious enquiries were made as to my ability to supply new ones. Head-coverings seemed, in fact, to be of great interest to the court circle, for when invited to the audience I was asked whether it was true that Europeans usually wore a black hat of very peculiar construction. When I admitted this and gave a description of it, much disappointment was evinced on learning that I could not gratify His Majesty by appearing in the European hat."

The King was a middle-aged, somewhat heavy but benevolent-looking man, his face deeply pitted by small-pox. He expressed himself as being very pleased with Helms' visit, and graciously accepted the presents offered, regretting that he had not been able to do more for his visitors' comfort. Then, referring to the present impoverished state of his country he described its former prosperity when large ships came up the Cambodian river, but added that there was still a large trade to be done. As a practical proof of this Helms was able to bring back a valuable cargo of rice, pepper, raw silk, ivory, tortoiseshell, cardomoms, gamboge, stick-lac and other things. A large quantity of buffalo hides and horns had to be brought down by water, and were intercepted by the Cochin Chinese. The King was, amongst other things, desirous of establishing a coinage, and requested Helms to secure for him the necessary machinery for coining, which was later done.

Helms was twice invited to the King's private apartments which were "full of a singular medley of Chinese, Japanese, Malay and European articles." He was most hospitably entertained:

"The King, though not himself partaking, now and then pointed out dishes which he thought would prove palatable, meanwhile carrying his youngest son, of whom he seemed very proud. On these occasions he spoke freely as to what was really in his mind with regard to politics, which came to this, that he desired his country to come under British protection. And indeed its present condition was a pitiful one. He was very anxious that English ships should again come up the river, but when I asked him as to protection through Cochin China he said: 'Good heavy guns will be your best passport!' As I left he presented me with silk stuffs woven in the palace, and an elephant of huge size was subsequently offered, but this I gratefully declined to accept."

While Helms was in Udong two French priests arrived from the interior to see him. They had heard of the arrival of an English ship, and having had no news for a long time from the Western world they bought an elephant and made a fatiguing journey:

"They told of dreadful persecutions which the missionaries had endured in Cochin China; they themselves had been imprisoned and tortured, and had narrowly escaped the death which had been the portion of many of their converts and some of their brethren. They were eager for news, and astonished to hear of the revolutions in Europe and the dethronement of Louis Philippe."

One wonders if these priests told Helms that a hundred miles or so to the north, beyond the Tonlé Sap or Great Lake, some of the world's most marvellous ruins lay in the suffocating embrace of the jungle. For missionaries down the years knew of the existence of Angkor, relic of the ancient Khmer Empire, and it was a missionary who, in 1860, led the French naturalist and explorer Henri Mouhot to the threshold of the great temple Angkor Wat.

As it was Helms made one or two expeditions in the neighbourhood of Udong, but without seeing anything of special interest. For the return journey to Kampot the King provided

elephants, which were considerably less tiring, as well as much quicker, than the carts. Helms established excellent relations with his mount, for having been given a large quantity of sweetmeats which he did not care for, he fed them to the elephant, much to that animal's enjoyment.

He got back to Singapore in the middle of June, and so ended his journey to Cambodia "of which the result from a commercial point of view was very satisfactory, and inaugurated a trade which has since been increasing." He took with him a petition from King Ang Duang for British protection, which he duly delivered to the proper quarter, and fulfilled his promise to plead the interests of Cambodia. But England was not interested.

"I hoped," wrote Helms, "that English enterprise would set in in that direction, but subsequent events threw those regions into the hands of the French." Eventually not only Cambodia, but the whole complex of states in the peninsula became French Indo-China:

"It suited the policy of Napoleon III to renew French prestige in that part of the world, and the cause of religion and the cruel treatment of French missionaries was the pretext for interference. But when I visited Saigon twenty years later I could not help seeing that the French, though a highly gifted and great nation, yet have not the art of colonising."

Be that as it may, it is nevertheless interesting to speculate on what might have been the course of history and the present-day outcome for the peninsula of Indo-China had Great Britain been willing to heed the King's appeal.

Chapter Seven

Bangkok

On the eve of Helms' departure from Cambodia a rumour reached him that the King of Siam, Rama III, was dead. In Singapore news of his last illness was received in a letter dated 29 March, 1851, sent to the editor of the Singapore Free Press by an American missionary, John Taylor Jones. Mr. Jones reported that the Royal Council was preparing to offer the crown, (for the principle of hereditary succession did not obtain in Siam at that time,) to the King's half-brother, Prince Mongkut, a monk of twenty-seven years standing and abbot of a Buddhist monastery. He wrote furthermore that Prince Mongkut had told him that he had agreed to accept the offer, and added: "So that no serious disturbances are apprehended." (Prince Chula Chakrabongse, Lords of Life, p.179.)

It was known in Singapore that Prince Mongkut was a man of progressive ideas who might be expected to be well-disposed towards Europeans and their trade, and it was thought that it might now be possible to renew commercial relations. Helms was asked by a group of Singapore business men if he would make the attempt, which he says: "I gladly consented to do." With another adventure in prospect he left Singapore once more on June 23, 1851. He was to call at ports on the Malayan coast going up the Gulf of Siam in order to find out if Prince Mongkut's accession was confirmed. Only if this was so would he make for the mouth of the river Menam, some forty miles down-stream from Bangkok.

The ship Pantaleon carried ten guns as a protection against

possible attacks by pirates, and after a pleasant five days sail along the forest clad coast of the Malay Peninsula, she arrived off Trengganu. Here Helms had an interview with the Rajah, who was very friendly but either could not, or would not give any information about Siamese affairs, though full of curiosity as to the object of the trip. He was less reticent about three large Chinese junks lying partly burnt out in the river, which he said had been pirate ships. A few years earlier this man himself had been one of the most active pirates on the coast, with a number of craft cruising about on his own account. But with the development of Singapore he thought it wiser to pose as a suppressor of piracy.

Continuing north they next called at Kelantan and came in sight of five large Chinese junks anchored off the mouth of the Kelantan River. Since trading junks would have left for China with the monsoon, they had little doubt that they now had before them the piratical fleet which they had been told at Kampot had left that place just before their arrival. They therefore anchored some distance out, opened their gun-ports, and gave themselves as much as possible the appearance of a man-of-war. This had the desired effect, and next morning the junks had gone, though Helms when he landed found the place "full of cut-throat Chinese belonging to them." He called on the Rajah of Kelantan, but with the same result as to the object of his enquiries; Siam was evidently a forbidden subject. So they sailed on to Singora, the ruler of which state was a Siamese vassal, and here at last they got the information they wanted. King Rama III had indeed died early in April, and accordingly they shaped their course for the mouth of the Menam, where they found three Siamese ships lying at anchor outside the bar, ready to sail for China with tributary gifts from the New King to the Emperor.* Helms was told that he would probably meet with a

friendly reception, and he prepared to proceed to Bangkok at once.

* This was the last occasion on which such a mission, acknowledging the ancient supremacy of China, while helping to maintain good trade relations between the two countries, was sent. Nor did China seek to enforce such a tribute.

He crossed the bar in the ship's boat and soon arrived at Paknam, a small fortified town at the entrance to the river. Here vessels bound for Bangkok had to be inspected, and leave any arms or military stores. The Commandant was greatly surprised to see the British flag, and could not understand how news of the old King's death had reached Singapore so quickly. He evidently thought Helms' mission somewhat audacious, but the latter explained that he had first heard the news when recently in Cambodia. "'Ah!' said the Commandant, 'so you are the one who recently visited Udong. Then we know all about you. But you must return on board and in a couple of days I will send you word as to the King's pleasure.'" But this did not suit Helms' plans; he feared lest it might mean indefinite procrastination. Also he thought that if the Siamese government wished to be friendly it would be unlikely to rebuff the first British ship to arrive. So he said that if he had to leave he would not return, and this had the desired effect. A messenger was sent ahead to announce his arrival. After a couple of hours wait he was permitted to proceed up-river, and arrived at Bangkok at 11 o'clock, next morning.

He described with enthusiasm the gardens, the fine trees and luxuriant vegetation, the richly decorated temples, and finally the rows of the floating houses which came in sight as they approached Bangkok itself. "These floating dwellings which can be moved from place to place are very convenient," he wrote. For the Menam, like the Nile, yearly overflows its banks, leaving an alluvial deposit and making the country very fertile.

The Portuguese, and after them the Dutch, were the first European nations to trade with Siam on any scale, but in 1851 their establishments and influence no longer existed. French enterprise had been mainly missionary in character, and although one or two English merchants had been in Siam as early as the reign of James I, England had not been, in later years, very successful in her negotiations for treaties. The latest of these attempts had been that of James Brooke in the previous year:

"One Portuguese gentleman was the only representative left of European merchants. To him I had letters of introduction and was received with the greatest kindness and hospitality."

One of the obstacles to trade with Siam at that time was the oppressive method of levying duty on ships. The usage was to take the measure of the deck, which resulted in an excessive charge, besides acting unfairly on small vessels:

"When, therefore, I was admitted to an interview with the Praklang [P'ra Klang = Foreign Minister] I told him that under such a condition I could not bring the ship up the river, and asked for a reduction of the duty. He promised to lay the matter before the King and let me know, and in due course I was informed that the King had granted my request and intended to give me an audience. What was more, it was to be an audience of a public and imposing character, in order, as I was told, that this change of an old custom of the country might be made in the presence of the notabilities of the state."

On the appointed day Helms and his Portuguese host set out by barge for the palace, rowing through the lanes or canals formed by the hundreds of floating houses:

"As all business is conducted on the water hundreds of small boats pass in every direction, mostly paddled by women dressed in bright colours with many ornaments... In boats only a few feet long these women and young girls sat squeezed in between all kinds of eatables; rice, fruits and vegetables of many kinds. All looked merry, laughter and banter was heard on every side. And beyond this floating world a wonderful panorama could be seen; innumerable spires and domes inlaid with porcelain and crystals, the embrasures polished and carved in openwork... All this, gleaming in the rays

of the sun, was a very striking sight and it was towards these buildings that our barge was now directed. As we neared the palace an increasing number of stately barges, each with long lines of rowers, and conveying richly-dressed nobles, came in sight. I realised that I had indeed been summoned to a solemn audience.

"We arrived at riverside stairs leading up to a square surrounded by a high wall, in which temples, barracks, and swelling-houses for the royal wives and the royal retinue were situated. We were ushered into a large hall where we found a great number of officials who, like ourselves, were awaiting the opening of the audience hall."

The princes and principal officers of state had not yet arrived, but presently a procession of magnificent sedan chairs passed by, each with a following of ten to thirty men and preceded by the emblems of the occupant's dignity, golden swords, tea-pots, siri boxes, carried upon silken cushions. Presently all except the two Europeans were summoned, and some little time passed before they too were called into an open space in the middle of which was the audience hall, a guard of some two hundred men in European uniform, red coats and white trousers, being drawn up at the entrance.*

* "Soon after his accession King Mongkut began to organise a modern army on European lines... There had been a company of soldiers dressed in Western uniforms since King Rama II had had some copied from the uniform of the sepoy who came with Crawford." (Prince Chula Chakrabongse, Lords of Life, p.194.) [John Crawford was the British envoy sent to King Rama in 1822.]

"We were here received by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, with whom was an interpreter and the Master of the Ceremonies, in a very correct court dress which I afterwards learnt had been given him by Sir James Brooke. A magnificent golden screen stood in front of the porch leading to the inner hall, and stepping round it a strange and gorgeous scene presented itself, an immense space with rows of carved and gilt pillars and overhanging roof cut in delicate lace-work, and inlaid with materials reflecting a variety of light and sparkling colours.

"At the further end, on a platform raised several feet was the throne, on either side of which was a gold and silver tree, and upon it sat, or rather reclined, the Siamese monarch. The Prime

Minister lay upon the steps, the Princes on either side, while the councillors and courtiers, a couple of hundred of them, knelt in long rows, their faces to the ground, on either side of the hall. This custom of kneeling in the presence of the King was got over by giving us a low seat."

King Mongkut has become of recent years the Siamese King best known to the western world, through an incident resulting from his policy of bringing certain European ideas and education to his country. For it was he who appointed the young widow Anna Leonowens as governess to the Siamese royal children, though the appointment was not made until eleven years after Helms visited Bangkok, and the Borneo Company, whose Singapore manager was instrumental in finding Mrs. Leonowens for the post, was not yet in existence.

Mrs. Leonowen's experiences were related by herself in a book published in 1870, The English Governess at the Siamese Court. One cannot but feel that the much romanticised version of her life there, known to us as The King and I, would not only have amazed but infuriated King Mongkut, and also much annoyed Anna Leonowens herself. It is regrettable that this remarkable man, revered by the Siamese people as one of their great kings, should have become known to so many in the West only through this particular presentation, delightful entertainment though it is.

Prince Chula Chakrabongse, in his book Lords of Life, pointed out that English writers who have made a study of King Mongkut's reign give it as their opinion that it was due more to him than to any other factor that Siam was able to preserve her independence when all the other states of South-East Asia were coming under European control. He quotes in particular a passage written by Sir Josiah Crosby, who lived and worked in Siam for some forty years in the British Foreign Service, as follows:

"To the sagacity of the members of the Royal House of Chakri indeed, the Siamese nation owes an incalculable debt, both for the preservation of its sovereign status through the wise policy of

compounding with the advance of Western civilisation instead of resisting it, initiated by King Mongkut, and continued by his son King Chulalongkorn, and for their services as its most enlightened and progressive leaders." (Sir Josiah Crosby, Siam at the Crossroads, London, 1945, pp.48-49; quoted in Lords of Life, p.196.)

King Mongkut had a tremendous thirst for knowledge which he was able to indulge to the full during his monastic years, and he became the first Asian king to be able to understand, speak and write English, which he learnt from the American missionaries who were his friends. A Roman Catholic priest taught him Latin, but it was his knowledge of English which enabled him to read books on geography, history, mathematics and the science of the day. He would have been well versed in the ancient wisdom of true astrology, but most enthusiastically he devoted himself to the study of astronomy; indeed his death in 1868 was indirectly caused by fatigue and exposure while observing a solar eclipse which he had correctly predicted.

This then was the man who received Helms on that July day, and the narrative continues:

"The King, whose lower garments and girdle glittered with gold and precious stones, was naked to the waist, unlike his courtiers who were all clad in rich robes or jackets.* He was seemingly of middle-age, thin, fair-complexioned, and had an air of good nature. Before him lay a golden sword with which he toyed now and then during the audience..."

* Prince Chula Chakrabongse tells us that one of the first edicts issued by King Mongkut after his accession concerned the dress to be worn at royal audiences, (Lords of Life, p.183.) Previously those who attended could do so naked to the waist if they wished, but he ordered that all should wear jackets. All published photographs of the King show him dressed likewise, but this particular occasion was only some three months after his accession. As far as I have been able to ascertain, Helms was the first European from outside Siam to whom he granted an audience. The small resident European community, consisting mainly of the various Christian missionaries, had, of course, been present at the coronation ceremonies which began on May 15, and continued for

several days.

"The audience did not last long. I was asked to state the object of my visit and what I required, and my statement was repeated by the interpreter. The King then asked a number of questions, showing that he was fully informed of my visits to Cambodia and the Malayan States, and wound up by granting my request as to the ship duties, and expressing a hope that the British Government would send an ambassador to Siam, when a treaty could be made. It was his wish, he said, to do all in his power to encourage European commerce. He felt sure that this could contribute greatly to the development of the resources of his country."

Helms had written a letter congratulating the King on his accession. This was handed to him and he returned a short written answer offering compliments and thanks, to which he ordered the Great Seal to be affixed. This writing has not survived the years and I never saw it. But one memento of that journey remains, a gift from another remarkable man, Prince Chuthamani, the King's half-brother, who had been appointed to the high office of Second or Deputy King immediately after King Mongkut's accession.*

* Prince Chuthamani was the last holder but one of this office, which became an anomaly once the principle of hereditary succession was accepted. King Mongkut was succeeded by his son, King Chulalongkorn.

Prince Chuthamani's interests were more practical and less studious than those of his brother, though he was also a good linguist and read much in English, including Dickens and Scott. But the artillery of the newly-formed small army was in his charge, and he was so absorbed in it that "everyone in his service had to be gunners, even royal bath attendants and gardeners," (Lords of Life, p.195.) and Mrs. Leonowens wrote that he found relaxation in what she called "scientific diversions," amongst which the making and repairing of clocks and watches was one. Helms says:

"The Second King had his troops reviewed in my presence, and on my departure presented me with a gold and silver flower, a sign

of grace and goodwill."*

* These gold and silver flowers, sometimes large trees such as Helms saw standing on each side of the royal throne, played a big part in Siamese life, and the Royal Palace at Bangkok contains many and varied examples of them. They were sent as tribute by the provinces to the central government, and they were given, as in this case, as tokens of friendly feeling, the idea being that they were made of the two most precious metals known at that time, and were fadeless, as real flowers would not be. (Information from the late Prince Chula Chakrabongse.)

And it is this flower, or rather spray of flowers, to which I refer. Alas, it has suffered with time, and some of its leaves and blossoms have fallen. But for me it has always kept an aura of enchantment.

The day before his departure Helms was bidden to the ceremonial cremation of the remains of two persons related to the royal family. It was the occasion of varied and pleasant ceremonies:

"There were, I was told, about 15,000 people present. The King arrived in great state, and, the burning over there were all sorts of festivities, during which the King, who with his family and suite occupied the royal box, threw new golden and silver coins, concealed in lemons, among the people. I had my place near him, between the Foreign Minister and the son of the King of Cambodia, who listened with great interest to the account I gave him of my visit to his father's residence at Udong. The King, on his departure, addressed a few kindly words to me, and invited me to settle in Siam."

Various ministers also received Helms with great courtesy. He mentions in particular being entertained by the P'ra Kalahom, (Prime Minister,) when, after refreshments had been served, what he called a "theatrical performance" was given by the ladies of the household. No doubt this was one of the traditional narrative ballets accompanied by music and singing which are described by Prince Chula Chakrabongse in his book. (Lords of Life, p.96.)

Presents were exchanged, and the government entrusted him with orders for machinery, and certain armaments and military stores:

"Thus ended my adventure in Siam, which had been both interesting and advantagious."

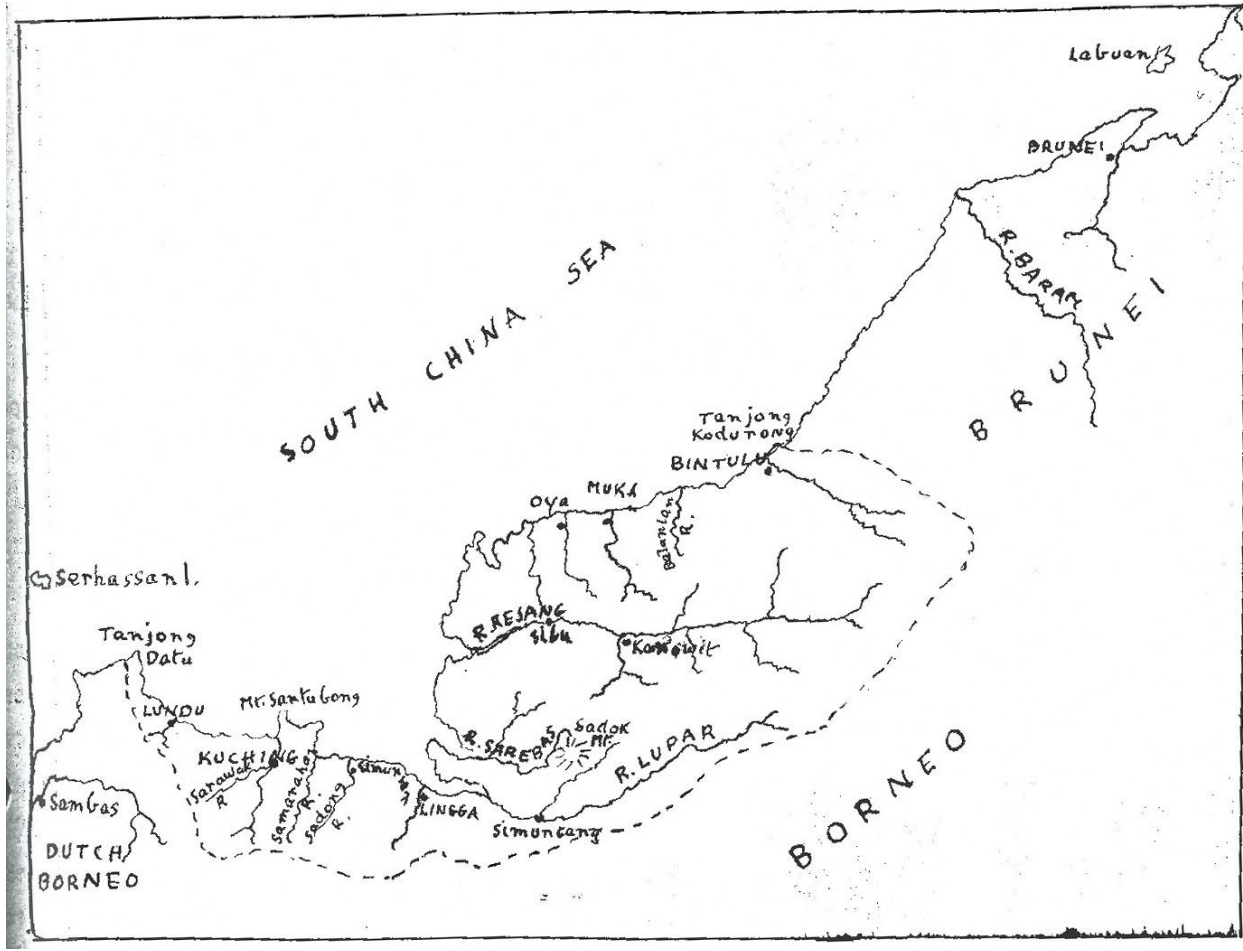
Four years later, in 1855, Sir John Bowring signed a treaty by which a British consul with full extra-territorial powers was appointed in Bangkok. Thereafter relations between Great Britain and Siam developed on normal lines, with a steadily increasing trade.

Part Two - Sarawak, 1852 - 1863

"The material of history is composed of remains, of documents, inscriptions and other objects... Documents provide facts and figures; they need to be checked strictly - not everything written or printed by Governments is true; far from it. Letters are often valuable but sometimes misleading. The evidence of eye-witnesses reflects at once events themselves and the prejudices of the witnesses. But it can be compared, contrasted and weighed, and the result brings one nearer to the truth."

André Maurois in his preface to The French Revolution by Georges Pernoud & Sabine Flaissier.

(Secker & Warburg, 1960.)



Sketch map of Sarawak as known to Helms. The interior of the country was unsurveyed, and the dotted line is approximate only.

Chapter Eight

Beginnings

In the New Year of 1852 began the most important and decisive period of Helms' life. He sailed for Sarawak, where he was to spend the next twenty years.

At the time of his arrival James Brooke, the first white Rajah, had been in that country for nearly thirteen years. The events which led to his arrival there and the happenings which brought about his assumption of rule have been ably and minutely dealt with by others. Very briefly the facts are these:

James Brooke was born in Benares on April 29th, 1803. His father held a post in the East India Company's Bengal Civil Service, and James remained in India till he was twelve. Sent home to relatives he was educated at Norwich Grammar School, and then joined the Army in Bengal. Serving in Burma in 1825 he was severely wounded, awarded a wound pension of £70 a year for life, and granted four and a half years leave of absence. Setting out to return to India six months before this leave expired he was shipwrecked, and this and subsequently unfavourable weather delayed his journey for so long that when he arrived at Madras in the ship Castle Huntley, he was too late to reach Calcutta before the date which marked the final expiration of his furlough. According to regulations his commission would be forfeit, and having a taste for adventure and the sea he decided to continue with the Castle Huntley to the Indian Archipelago and China. It was in this ship that he first met Jem Templer, of the Bridport family of that name, who was mate, and through him Jem's brother John, who became a

close friend.

The beauty and mystery of the islands of the Eastern seas attracted James and he determined to return and explore them further. From that time onwards he fixed his mind on the idea of getting his own ship, and persuaded his father to buy a brig of 200 tons in which he set sail on a trading venture. This failing, brig and cargo were sold at a loss and he returned to England. But the experience, far from discouraging him, only set him planning how to start out once more. With the death of his father in 1835 came his chance. He inherited £30,000, and bought himself a small schooner, the Royalist, in which he sailed in December 1838 for Singapore. And it was here that his ultimate destination was decided, for although he had had thoughts of Borneo he had made no definite plans.

Borneo was still largely unknown country at that time. The Dutch had settlements in the south and east of the island, and the north-west was nominally under the rule of the Sultan of Brunei, the southernmost part of his territory being the province of Sarawak, governed at that time by his uncle and heir-apparent, the Rajah Muda Hasim, who had been sent there in 1837 to counter a rebellion against the previous governor, Pangeran Makota. The coasts were, however, infested by pirates, and the interior was in a constant state of civil war between rival factions.

At the time James Brooke arrived in Singapore some shipwrecked seamen had reported being well and humanely treated by Hasim, and the Singapore authorities were anxious to make some acknowledgement of his kindness. James accepted the mission of taking a letter of thanks and some gifts across to Sarawak on their behalf, which suited his plans admirably, and he anchored at Kuching for the first time in August 1839. Later, fascinated by the country to

which he had come, attracted by its trading potentialities, and also moved by the wretched condition of many of its inhabitants, he entered into lengthy negotiations with Hasim, and in the end obtained through him a lease of Sarawak from the Sultan, in consideration of a fixed annual payment of a thousand pounds.* Thus began one of the most unusual private enterprises in history.

* The original territory, known as 'Sarawak proper.' Later on additional territory was obtained from time to time from Brunei.

It was the question concerning the nature of his tenure of the country which for so long bedevilled James Brooke's position, for it was many years before his possession of it was considered by the British government to be other than a private arrangement between a British subject and a foreign sovereign, and its status being thus indeterminate he had not the right to call for British protection should it be needed.

Added to this was the equally and often more immediately pressing problem of finance. James Brooke was a romantic and a gallant figure, but no government can function upon romance or gallantry alone, nor upon the private fortunes of those who compose it. A constant revenue is needed, and the time came when it was necessary to start creating one by developing the country's resources systematically. It was this effort which brought Helms to Sarawak in the first place, and later caused the formation of the Borneo Company Ltd., without which, it is fair to say, Brooke Sarawak could not have continued to exist at that time.

Here I will quote the opening paragraphs of a small book which Helms wrote in later life for his son, much of which did not appear in his published reminiscences:

"When Mr. Brooke for the first time entered the Sarawak River on the 15th of August 1839, and anchored at Kuching which was for so many years to be his residence and the capital of his territory,

it was a small place with less than a thousand inhabitants, mainly consisting of Brunei nobles and their followers who, a few years before Mr. Brooke's arrival, had been attracted to this part of the dominions of the Sultan of Brunei by the report of a metal found there, - supposed at first to be silver, but proved to be antimony. It was an unhappy discovery for the poor Sarawak Malays and Dyaks who occupied the country. The Sultan's representative, Pangeran Makota, and other nobles, did not come to Sarawak to govern it, but to compel the inhabitants to work and collect the antimony for their benefit, without any recompense but a fictitious one. The ore thus collected was sent in native boats to Singapore where it found a market. But these poor Malays and emaciated Dyak tribes were at last driven by their miseries into rebellion against their Brunei oppressors, which led to his becoming the Rajah of the country. Antimony ore was thus the indirect cause of this unique event, and a few years later it became the cause of my going to Borneo.

"Accident directed the future Rajah of Sarawak to the scene of his labours, and circumstances gradually wove the thread of his destiny, yet it was a strange determination for an English gentleman of independent means, eminently suited to enjoy social life and aspire to worldly distinction, to choose a scene like this. What a task for unaided private enterprise to stop and turn back the savagery and decay of centuries; to step in between oppressor and oppressed with a code of morals and justice scarcely comprehended by them, to brave the perils of open enmity and secret treachery, and, almost worst of all, the persecution of his own countrymen who, with pardonable incapacity to appreciate the circumstances under which the Rajah laboured, combined the unpardonable assumption of the right to judge him."

For in 1849 started the attacks upon James Brooke which dragged on for some five years:

"Many of the malicious and unfounded accusations upon which these attacks were based were concocted at Singapore... But the chief promoters of these persecutions at home were two members of the British Parliament, Messrs. Hume and Cobden, who accused the Rajah of having, with the assistance of British warships under Captain [afterwards Admiral] Keppel, attacked and destroyed with much slaughter fleets of peaceful Dyak traders."

The whole position was further complicated by the fact that in 1847 the British Government had appointed James Governor of Labuan, which had been ceded to England as an uninhabited island in the previous year. He was also made Consul General of Borneo and in the

following year was knighted. He therefore held an official position which, his detractors maintained, was incompatible with his position as Rajah of Sarawak. Labuan had coal deposits and it was at first thought that the island might in time rival Singapore in importance. But this idea proved illusory, and in the end the deposits never really paid for the working, though they led to an inconceivable amount of intrigue.

"What Rajah Brooke might have made of Borneo but for this opposition it is difficult to say," wrote Helms. "To the future historian Sir James will probably appear a more dramatic personage by reason of his independent actions and unmerited persecution; but those who, like myself, were witnesses to and understood the import of the work he was doing, could not but deplore this senseless obstruction... It was at the height of this controversy that I accepted an offer to go to Sarawak."

The Rajah himself was in England at the time, attempting to deal with his attackers, and the country had been left in charge of his nephew and acknowledged heir-apparent, Captain Brooke Brooke. A Commission of Enquiry had recently been demanded in the House of Commons, and this naturally cast some gloom over the small European community in Sarawak, where it was felt that such proceedings would tend to lessen the Rajah's prestige.

"That a first sight of Borneo should have inspired Mr. Brooke I can well understand," continues Helms. "When, on the 16th of January, 1852, I for the first time steamed past Tandjong Dattu in the Hon. East India Co's war-steamer Pluto, I beheld with delight the country which was for so many years to be my home. The landscape presented ranges of mountains of picturesque and varied shapes, from which a succession of hills and fertile valleys sloped down to the Sarawak River, at the mouth of which rose the beautiful mountain of Santubong, its steep slopes covered to the very top by magnificent timber, while the sandy beach at its foot was bordered by graceful casuarinas.

"As yet the people were too poor to be taxed, there was no trade, and the only certain source of income to support the Rajah's government was a royalty on antimony. A London firm, Messrs. R. & J. Henderson, had taken the lease for working the antimony mines,

and through their representative in Singapore I obtained an appointment as their agent."

It was now that Helms' previous experience in Bali and elsewhere began to bear fruit. Young men with several years trading experience in the Far East and accustomed to dealing with native labour, were not so easily come by at that date.

"I had come to Borneo not only to buy up the antimonial ore," he goes on, "but generally to develop the trade of the country which as yet was insignificant, the trading community consisting of a few Chinese and Indians, whose shops, in native-built huts, made up the bazaar at Kuching. Yet humble as was this beginning of Rajah Brooke's capital it was a great improvement upon what he had found on his first arrival in Sarawak; the comfortable Government House in process of construction, a few bungalows and a pretty little church, showed that European civilisation had been fairly planted in the country.

"A memorandum recording my first arrival in Sarawak contains the following entry: 'Arrived this day in the steamship Pluto from Singapore. Called upon Captain Brooke, who asked me to take up my residence in the Government House till such time as I made my arrangements. I was, during the day, introduced to Mr. Arthur Crookshank, the magistrate; Mr. Ruppell, treasurer; Mr. Spenser St John, Rajah Brooke's secretary; Mr. Crymble, in charge of the fort; the missionaries Fox, Nicholls and Chambers; and Mr. Hentig, a planter.' These, and two or three others in subordinate positions, constituted the European population of the town of Kuching on my first arrival there, the Rajah being absent in England, and Mr. (afterwards Bishop) McDougall and family on their way home."

Thus on that first day Helms met several of those who were to play leading parts in coming events, including the man with whose adverse fate his own fate was to become indirectly so strangely linked, Captain John Brooke Johnson Brooke.

Captain Brooke, then aged twenty-eight, was the eldest son of the Rev. Francis Charles Johnson and his wife Emma Frances, James Brooke's eldest and favourite sister. Since James was unmarried there had long been an understanding between his sister and brother-in-law and himself that John Brooke Johnson should succeed him as Rajah. He started his career in the Army and became Captain

in H.M. 88th Regiment of Foot, but arranged for long leave in order to join his uncle in 1848, at the same time taking the additional surname of Brooke by deed-poll. (The Raja of Sarawak, Gertrude Jacob, Vol. 1 p.362.)

He is referred to by the name of Brooke Johnson Brooke in a letter written by Sir James on September 16 of that year: "Brooke Johnson Brooke found me the day before yesterday, and we shall, I think, be a happy party." (Jacob, 1, p.364.) A sentence written by Bishop McDougall describes his arrival in Kuching in that month as follows:

"Brooke Johnson Brooke is arrived and the Rajah is feasting the people for the entertainment of the heir-apparent..."* (Quoted by Emily Hahn, James Brooke of Sarawak, p.135.) In September 1853 he left the Army to devote himself to Sarawak, and at his uncle's request threw the price of his commission, £1500, into the Sarawak State Treasury. (A Statement regarding Sarawak, J. Brooke Brooke, London, 1863; quoted by Helms, Pioneering in the Far East, p.215.)

* I have gone into the matter of Captain Brooke's correct name at some length, as considerable confusion appears to exist on the subject. A recent writer gives the impression that in those early years he was known as John Johnson, and that Brooke Brooke was 'the odd-sounding name he chose for himself.' (The White Rajahs of Sarawak, Robert Payne, p. 108.) Sir Steven Runciman in The White Rajahs, while mentioning him correctly as John on p.52, then refers to him as James on p.89, and also indexes him under that name, thus repeating the error of earlier writers in particular S. Baring-Gould and C.A. Bamfylde in A History of Sarawak under its Two White Rajahs. His Malay title was Tuan Besar, or Mighty Lord. The Europeans usually referred to him as Brooke Brooke or as Captain Brooke. He no longer used the name of Johnson after taking the additional surname of Brooke, though it remained legally his.

Of the other men mentioned Arthur Crookshank was first cousin to Captain Brooke, a nephew of the Rev. F.C. Johnson; Ruppell is mentioned by the Rajah in a letter to his mother on September 24,

1843, as being a Bridport man, "highly respectable and pleasing with a cool temper and matured judgment." (Jacob, 1, p.256.) Spenser St. John had become the Rajah's secretary in 1848. William Crymble had been with the Rajah for many years, and Hentig was a settler who arrived in 1843. He is said by an early writer to have had a most beautiful garden in which he experimented in the growing of spices, oranges, cotton and "many other exotic plants." (Sarawak, its Inhabitants and Productions, p.33, Hugh Low.)

Two others of great importance were absent when Helms first arrived. Charles Grant, one of the Rajah's staunchest followers, who had left the Navy in 1848 to join him, was on a trip to the United States, having been sent by Sir James as his deputy to accept an invitation from President Fillmore to visit Washington. And Charles Anthoni Johnson, (later Rajah Sir Charles Brooke,) Brooke Brooke's younger brother, aged 23 at that time, was still in the Navy, and only arrived in the following July when he took two years leave to see how he liked life in Sarawak, which in those days entailed many and varied experiences, often spiced with danger.

For one thing much time had to be spent in dealing with pirates, those same pirates so persistently regarded by Messrs. Cobden and Hume as peaceful traders. Few months of the year were free from their activities and January 1852 was no exception, for Helms records that Brooke Brooke and St. John embarked in the Pluto which had brought him across, to join an expedition sent by the British Government to deal with a band which had taken an English schooner in Maladu (now known as Marudu) Bay, on the north coast of Borneo. Obviously adventure might be expected in this country, and he was never averse to adventure. Indeed much was to come his way in the course of the twenty years he spent there.

First, however, he set about organising the work which had brought him to Kuching:

"It took nearly a month after my arrival before I could take possession of the little mat-bungalow which was to be my residence," he wrote. "It was very small, little more than a square box of palm-leaves divided into two parts one being the sitting the other the bedroom, with a verandah all round. It was prettily situated on the top of a hill looking down upon the river and town, with villages further out and beyond them the mountain-ranges. But the clearing at that time was not large, and the sombre forests surrounded us on every side. My entire staff consisted of a Chinese cook and a Kling clerk and factotum, my faithful Abdullah, who for twenty years served the Company and myself with unsurpassed devotion. He was my only assistant then, and our business transactions were very trifling; but thousands of men were at work for us directly and indirectly before I left. But neither of these two servants lived in my bungalow, and it speaks volumes for the effect already produced by Rajah Brooke's rule that I felt it safe to live absolutely alone in this jungle-surrounded dwelling with no one within call."

In common with many men and women of his day Helms was in the habit of sketching. At that time, when photography was in its infancy, and cameras very cumbersome, the brush or pencil formed a convenient method of record. A rough drawing still in existence shows this first bungalow on the hill, surrounded by trees, in the foreground some storehouse by the river and a building with a walled enclosure which he labelled Chinese Joss-house, the whole sketch entitled The Sarawak Establishment and my Bungalow in 1854. Since he was quite untrained as an artist the picture is innocent of perspective, but he had an excellent sense of colour, and such of his water-colours as have survived are quite pleasing for that reason.

"My first charge was to collect and ship the antimony ore," he goes on. "It was found in boulders on the surface, and also in veins in the limestone rock. This was worked and the ore collected by all the races - Chinese, Malays and Dyaks, - who, unaccustomed as they were to receive fair payment in cash for their labours, soon brought me ample supplies which I shipped in small craft owned

by Chinese and Indian traders in Singapore, for transshipment to London. Considering the mixture of nationalities and tribes there were surprisingly few disputes, and sea-Dyaks from Saribas and Sakarran who, but a few years before had been a dread to the land-Dyaks, now worked peaceably side by side with them. It was the day of small things in trade, of slow communication with the outer world, relieved only by the excitements which the unsettled state of the country caused now and then, such as the news of piratical depredations on the coast, intrigues of Malay chiefs, and actions of hostile Dyak tribes who regretted the passing of the days of rapine and plunder which they saw that the White Rajah's actions tended to bring about.

"I realised the capabilities of the country and the interest and importance of the charge with which I had been entrusted. The success of the noble cause to which Rajah Brooke had given his life must largely depend upon such development of the industry and trade of the country as would bring prosperity to his people, and to himself means to meet his responsibilities. Coming as I did with considerable experience of different parts of the East, and having been in close contact with natives of various races and classes I soon understood the situation.

"Except for the antimony ore no produce of any consequence had been exported up to this time, but from Muka and Oya, settlements some 150 miles north, there was a considerable export of raw sago in native boats to Singapore. Extensive plantations of the sago-palm existed in those settlements, but they were under the Sultan's rule. The raw sago exported was the pith of the palm crudely manipulated by the natives, and made into flour and pearl sago in Chinese factories in Singapore.

"To divert this trade to Sarawak was therefore the next object requiring my attention. I established a factory on the Chinese plan and attracted some of the coasting trade which hitherto had sought a market in Singapore. A first step in development had thus been taken."

Sir James sometimes spoke of Helms as "the sago merchant," and indeed his records show that during those first years his mind was occupied largely by two commodities, sago and antimony. For the one was already being grown and the other already being mined in the country, while further profitable exports were yet to seek.

Helms' description of those first years continues:

"My time was passed between my office and the antimony mines, and I was brought into daily contact with all classes of the

population. The people were poor, and came to me for advances to enable them to collect the produce of the forest, to build boats, or to enable them to undertake trading ventures. The process seemed slow. I would have liked to see trade develop more rapidly; the resources of the country were great, and ought, I thought, to show greater results, but experience had to teach me that time must be reckoned with. The truth is, that in civilising a country so deeply sunk in barbarism as was Sarawak when Sir James first arrived there, the labour of one lifetime is not rewarded by the fruition of success; whether we regard the Government, the Church mission, or the commercial development of the country. Trade is an important civilising agent, but it could not at once alter the habits of the people, the bulk of whom were poor, idle and distrustful, all the results of misrule and oppression. They had to learn that their earnings were secure before they thought it worth while to work for the acquisition of property. As yet the Chinese trading element was not large; as it increased trade developed, and the combined effects of regular government and increasing prosperity became visible in many ways.

"Rajah Brooke wisely adapted his system of government to the circumstances by which he was surrounded. To have attempted violent reforms, based upon western ideas of morality and justice, would have been hopeless. The amelioration of the condition of the people was a work requiring time and patience. He took no steps of importance without taking the people into his confidence, and he, in fact, associated the Chiefs who had exercised authority previous to his arrival, in the government. These, who bore the title of Datu, were three in number, and amongst them and their descendants there were men of the best Malay type, - able, gentlemanly and courteous.

"I attended every Wednesday at the Court, which was presided over by the Rajah, Captain Brooke, or Mr. Crookshank, and where the Datus also assisted and joined in the examination of cases with the greatest intelligence; it was a Court of Equity, guided to some extent by Mahomedan laws and usages. Criminal as well as civil cases were brought before us, but a great proportion were debt cases. The Kling traders particularly were very litigious, and seemed to enjoy it, law being cheap. I have reason to know that entirely fictitious cases, which it took hours to examine, were got up, and bets made as to who should gain his case.*

* Three years after Helms' arrival, on 17 October, 1855, a Council of State was instituted by decree. It was composed of the Rajah and his two nephews, the Tuan Besar and the Tuan Muda, and of the Datu Bandar, the Datu Temanggong, the Datu Imam, (chief Muslim

religious authority,) and the Tuan Katib, (the native scribe or secretary.) (Runciman, The White Rajahs, p.122.)

"In later days trial by jury was introduced in criminal cases, and when the accused were Chinese the jurymen were selected from Europeans, Malays and Chinese. I will not express an opinion as to whether the system was a safe one under such circumstances, but as foreman of the jury, otherwise composed of the Malay chiefs and principal Chinese traders, I generally found it impossible to extract an independent opinion on the answer to my question 'Guilty or not guilty?' usually was 'Apa katta Tuan?' (What do you say, Sir?')"

Helms devoted a chapter of his book to descriptions of the natural beauties of the country which, having to make frequent expeditions connected with his work, he had excellent opportunities of observing. Since there were no roads his travels were made largely by boat, "reclining on mats and pillows, well screened against sun and rain, and propelled by a crew of lusty Malays, whose songs formed an accompaniment to the regular strokes of the paddles." He mentioned in particular the wonderful limestone formations of the upper Sarawak River; the endless variety of tropical vegetation, tree-ferns, creepers, orchids and flowering shrubs of gorgeous colours; the brilliant plumage of the birds; the fireflies and the chirping of the cicadas at night. All these things were still comparatively new and strange to the public for whom he wrote his book. He was less enthusiastic about the mosquitos, and the leeches which infested every stream and rendered a bathe practically impossible. And he gave a graphic account of the difficulties encountered when it became necessary to leave the boat and cut a way through the jungle, a process not altogether without danger, for the Dyaks were in the habit of setting traps for wild pig and deer, which if inadvertently set off might cause serious or even fatal injury, and were a constant cause of anxiety:

"Under these circumstances a tropical forest does not inspire the same feelings of delight as when one views it reclining

comfortably in a boat, while the Malays prepare a delicious curry on some pebbly bank in the river."

Antimony and gold were both worked in the district embraced by the two streams which unite to form the Sarawak River. The greater part of both metals was obtained by the natives and Chinese in shallow diggings, the antimony in boulders, the gold-dust by the washing of the soil. The men scattered in small parties over the district and frequently changed their ground:

"I used to find them winning the ore in the most varied, often difficult localities; now in some picturesque dell, or in crevices within the mountains, or again on tower-like summits or craggy pinnacles, only accessible by precarious ladders."

Modern research has shown that the connection of the Chinese with Borneo dates back many centuries.* This was not known with

* See Note 1 in Appendix, by Mr. Tom Harrisson.

any certainty to the men of Helms' generation, though they suspected it, and he told how mining operations would frequently uncover fragments of pottery and porcelain, on one occasion a number of square paving tiles "beautifully made... of antique, apparently Chinese make." But even in his day the Chinese were known to have been in the island in considerable numbers for many years, in the north where they occupied themselves chiefly with pepper-planting, and in the Dutch territory in the south-west where they worked gold. Some years before James Brooke arrived these Chinese from the south-west crossed into Sarawak for the purpose of extending their gold-washing operations, but they were driven out by the Malays. After the Rajah's government had brought about law and order they returned, and established considerable settlements in Upper Sarawak, notably at Bau, about fifteen miles up-river from Kuching. Their principal occupation was gold-washing, but many were employed in mining antimony, and some engaged in agriculture:

"The gold was obtained by sluicing operations and only hardworking and thrifty people like the Chinese could have made a

living out of it. Their labours in the construction of reservoirs, sluices and water-races were very great, and the extent of country turned over and worked by them was prodigious."

"They lived," said Helms, "from hand to mouth as miners often do," and the result of their laborious operations rarely sufficed to pay their debts. Their creditors had to take them on trust, but "they rarely belied their confidence when they had the means." They governed themselves under a kongsi (an organisation established mainly for trading purposes,) and were practically independent of the Rajah's government save that the latter levied certain taxes upon them.

Before Helms had been in Sarawak a year the first faint sign of trouble with the Chinese showed itself. This was to culminate some four years later in the Chinese Insurrection which, although of short duration, exercised indirectly a disproportionate effect upon Sarawak history.

Friction with the Kuching government usually arose over such matters as tax-collecting and the census-taking on which this was largely based, both of which operations the Chinese obstructed as far as possible. But in December 1852 the immediate cause of the trouble was that the kongsi had concealed and protected a criminal, and offered resistance to a government officer sent to arrest him.

There are three notes from Captain Brooke among Helms' papers, all dealing with this incident, and dated December 2nd. The first reads:

"My dear Helms,

"The high and threatening tone taken by the Chinese Konsie of late induces me to take up a force to bring them to reason, and I am forced to take away most of the Government officers. Will you therefore act with the Missionaries and Crymble for the preservation of the place in case of emergency. I have no doubt that you could command the assistance of the crew of the Johanna Caesar in case of disturbances.

"I remain, truly yours,

J. Brooke Brooke."

Note to above appended by Helms:

"This was the first sign of Chinese restlessness, - checked on this occasion, but which in 1857 led to disastrous results. The Johanna Caesar to which Captain Brooke refers was the same vessel which five years previously had brought me out from Europe. Being now again in these seas Captain Elberfeld, being desirous to see me again, obtained a charter to carry a cargo which I was to supply."

The second note refers to two employees of Helms, apparently Chinese, who were to act as go-betweens. It reads:

"My dear Helms,

"I understand that Aweye and Aboo agreed to go up with us to Ledah Tanah this evening. I should strongly recommend them to do so if they sincerely wish to save their countrymen. I am, I assure you, as anxious as you can wish to accommodate matters. Pray recommend them strongly to start with us, and after I have met the Dattus and Chiefs at Ledah Tanah it is very possible I may despatch them on to Bauh.

"Yrs in haste,

J. Brooke Brooke."

And the third states:

"My dear Helms,

"Peter* has just returned and his story alters the case very much. He says the Konsie are determined to give the man up. So tell Aweye and Aboo I insist on their coming up and they shall be allowed to go on and communicate with the Konsie.

"Yrs,

J. Brooke Brooke."

* Middleton, the chief constable.

So ended the first faint warning of trouble, and for over four years longer the Chinese question remained in abeyance.

The Rajah returned from England early in 1853. The arrangements for the proposed Commission of Enquiry were slowly taking shape, and it was to sit in Singapore. In the end it was more than a year before it opened in September 1854, and meanwhile a severe trial was in store for Sir James. Just after he got back to Kuching he developed small-pox. "For three days his life was

despaired of, and I may safely say that I was never so unhappy in my life," wrote Captain Brooke to his mother. (Memoirs of Bishop McDougall and Harriette his Wife, C.J. Bunyon, p.106.) He seemed to make a complete recovery, but in the light of later events one wonders whether there were effects imperceptible at the time.

The Commission in the end sat for some two months. It cleared James of Hume's charges, and to that extent set his mind at rest, but it left the position of Sarawak as undetermined as ever, holding it, in the words of one of the Commissioners, "neither necessary nor prudent that he [the Rajah] should be entrusted by the British Crown with any discretion to determine which tribes are piratical," nor to call for the aid of the Navy, since his position was "no other than that of a vassal of the Sultan of Brunei."

(James Brooke of Sarawak, Emily Hahn, p.199.) The other Commissioner, though he did not express himself quite as strongly, found himself equally unable to solve the basic problem. Very naturally the proceedings did not help the Rajah's prestige.

Still, in the lull which followed the ending of the Singapore proceedings James "quietly devoted himself to the administration of the country and to promoting the happiness of its people," says Helms. And one of his first actions after his recovery was to visit his suzerain the Sultan, and obtain from him the concession of another large piece of territory in return for a further annual payment.*

* This included the Skrang and Sarebas districts.

To help the Rajah's convalescence Captain Brooke built him a bungalow high up on Serambo mountain, and here Helms visited him, (he preserved an invitation in Sir James' writing,) meeting among others Alfred Russel Wallace who spent some time in Sarawak working on his theory of natural selection. The philosophic discussions

which took place at these gatherings were later described at some length by Spenser St. John in his Life of Sir James Brooke.

Of Sir James at that time Helms wrote:

"The deadly disease which had afflicted him had been overcome without apparently affecting him... and his gentleness and winning manners were probably never more conspicuous to his friends than at this period of thankfulness for his recovery... The charm of his society is still vivid in my recollection. Later on, in Kuching, during our evening rides when he used to walk his old Arab* along the two miles of road which was all that Kuching then boasted, he

* In a letter to his niece Mary Nicholetts in January 1850, Sir James mentions his two horses, "Rufus the chestnut and Baby, the Arab." (Jacob, 1, p.373.)

liked to talk over the political and commercial prospects of the country, to hear of my doings, and to give me the latest information which the natives had brought,- it might be some discovery of coal or other mineral, generally with nothing in it. 'I will make you an Abang, Helms,' he once laughingly said to me, 'if that turns out a workable coal-seam.' The material prosperity and commercial progress of the country was a matter very near his heart and as I was naturally deeply interested in it there was a bond of sympathy between us.

"The first five years of my life in Sarawak were passed in uneventful quiet, but I look back upon them with unfeigned pleasure. Our society consisted entirely of the gentlemen connected with the Rajah and the government, and the Mission of which Mr. McDougall was the head, including at first only one lady, Mrs. McDougall. Some were stationed on the Coast, but these latter were always welcome, for the Rajah did not keep young men who joined him under strict disciplinary rules... Unhappily the time was not distant when shadows were to fall over the little community, when affection, confidence and friendship, the growth of years, were to be destroyed; but this time was not yet."

Chapter Nine

The Chinese Insurrection

During 1855 and 1856 two events happened which, says Helms, tended "to soothe the Rajah's harassed mind."

The first was that Mr. McDougall, head of the Borneo Mission, was named Bishop of Labuan, and also, on later representations from Sir James, Bishop of Sarawak. "This recognition on the part of the religious world... must have been gratifying to him," wrote Helms. The Dyaks, in particular, were ready to become either Christians or Muslims at that time, and that they "should not become converts to the latter faith was also, for political reasons, much to be desired."

Francis Thomas McDougall and his wife Harriette were a remarkable couple and Sarawak owes them much. He was qualified both in medicine and surgery, and had been demonstrator in anatomy at King's College Hospital before taking orders. She came from a family which had already produced several missionaries. They left England for Kuching at the end of 1847, taking with them an infant son who died three years later in Singapore, while an elder boy, aged two, was left in England. It was to this boy, Charley, that Harriette McDougall wrote the letters which were afterwards published in book form and give a striking picture of early days in Brooke Sarawak.

The second happening, in the summer of 1856, particularly concerned Helms himself. The business which he had been sent to Borneo to develop had advanced so far that those interested in it thought the time had come to enlarge operations, and thus to help the Rajah to open up the resources of the country:

"A company was formed calling itself the Borneo Company Ltd., which took over the business I had hitherto conducted. It was financially strong, and its objects were far-reaching, comprising trade, mining and agriculture."

Among the Directors were Robert Henderson, of the firm which had sent Helms to Sarawak, and the Rajah's old friend John Templer, a barrister. Helms himself was appointed manager. St. John, who had recently been appointed Consul-General in Borneo in the Rajah's place, says that Sir James disliked the appointment and wanted him to resign from Government service and take on the post, but the Directors would not agree to this. (St. John, Life of Sir James Brooke, p.282.) Actually it would have been absurd, as of course he had no commercial experience. But from his later actions and writing it is evident that he never forgave the Company's attitude.*

* He had also a background connection with Henry Wise and the Eastern Archipelago Co. which would in itself make him unacceptable to the Directors. The matter does not come within the scope of this book but is referred to briefly in Note 2 in the Appendix.

An important fact with regard to the Company was that the lease which it obtained to work the various minerals and generally to develop the trade of the country, was framed between Sir James and Captain Brooke as co-lessors, (the latter as heir-presumptive,) and the Borneo Company Ltd. as lessees:

"This negotiation was a very long one, the lease was most rigidly considered by the professional advisers on both sides, and Mr. Brooke executed it in the perfect faith that his description as heir-presumptive to his uncle was correct, and the covenants of the lease are made with, while the grant of the minerals is made by, both the co-lessors."

(J. Brooke Brooke, A Statement Regarding Sarawak. Quoted by Helms, Pioneering in the Far East, p.217.)

This was a fact which became of considerable importance later on.

The formation of the Borneo Company pleased Helms greatly, but operations had to be started gradually. The country was covered with dense jungle, unsurveyed and roadless. Much of the labour needed had to be imported, food to some extent also. The Company provided a new steamer to improve communications, the Sir James Brooke which, as it turned out, was to play an important part in coming events; and energetic young men, eager for work, came out from England. But everything had to be begun from scratch, and experience had to be bought:

"These are not conditions exactly favourable for the operations of a company which, however philanthropic it may think itself, never loses sight of dividends and properly so."

That in this case both philanthropy and business were combined sometimes produced undue eagerness Helms thought, and a desire to push on faster than circumstances permitted. This led to some unwise undertakings such as the abortive attempt to work coal at Simunjan where, preliminary surveys having yielded a favourable report, the Directors decided to go ahead. But the report had been a superficial one, no boring had been put down to ascertain the thickness and continuity of the seam, and the result was unsatisfactory. After a large sum of money had been spent the scheme was abandoned, (though the coal was later worked on a limited scale by the Sarawak Government.) This enterprise was entirely distinct from the Sarawak branch of the Borneo Company, but in London the loss was transferred to the account of that branch, and with accumulating interest it became, in Helms' words, "a hindrance to progress and an injustice to myself." Indeed, this matter is referred to again and again in his correspondence with his Directors, and was a thorn in his flesh for years, since his later agreement provided that one third of any profit made by the Sarawak branch should be his.

However, "everything promised well for the future when the initial difficulties should have been overcome and the initial mistakes corrected." And the social world of Kuching had grown considerably too, which added to the pleasantness of life. Arthur Crookshank had lately returned from England, bringing with him his young wife, then barely seventeen, later described by Bishop McDougall as "this interesting young creature." (McDougall Memoirs, p.14.) The McDougalls themselves were back again, "the presence of the ladies shed brightness over the place and more were to come." Towards the end of 1855 both Brooke Brooke and Charles Grant had gone home on leave. Now news came that they were returning with their brides, Captain Brooke having married Charles Grant's sister, Annie. The two young couples were due to arrive early in the New Year of 1857.

Sir James was on holiday in Singapore and Crookshank was in charge of the government when the kongsi at Bau began behaving suspiciously. Crookshank garrisoned the fort and sent for Charles Johnson to come in from his outlying district of Skrang with some men. But the Rajah on his return fined and lectured the Chinese leaders, and cancelled Crookshank's measures, although in a business letter he wrote to Helms, dated February 5, there is this postscript:- "I am uneasy about our communications, a sailing vessel if employed ought to be here, as the steamer must have been in Singapore by the 14th," (of January.) However, on February 13 he wrote to an old friend: "The Borneo Company goes on well and its profits during the first year were quite unlooked for on my part. The Directors are evidently men of sense and character, and if they fall into mistakes evince this by correcting them." (Jacob, 2, p.234.)

Alas for confident hopes. This was written only six days before the event which was, in Helms' words, "to blight the Company's immediate prospects and retard its progress for years; the Chinese Insurrection, which not only upset the Rajah's government, but created a feeling of unrest and insecurity which was fatal to the object it had in view."

The immediate cause of discontent at Bau had to do with the opium trade which was in the hands of the government. The consumption of opium there amounted to sixty balls per month, but although the population had increased the demand had fallen by half and there was much smuggling. The government ordered that the Bau kongsi should pay as usual for the sixty balls whether it took them or not, and this gave the Chinese the excuse they wanted. The underlying cause of the trouble went much deeper however, and had to do with the underground activities of the Chinese secret societies. For many years efforts had been made to form one in Sarawak, but the Rajah had managed to prevent this. Events outside the country in 1856 helped to bring matters to a head. They hinged upon England's relations with China. The Canton Chinese defied the British and the Chinese Commissioner there announced that he would pay thirty dollars for each English head. This news spread like wildfire throughout the Chinese communities of south-east Asia, and in January 1857 a small rising was staged in Singapore. It was easily dealt with, but it was very near at hand and set the match to the powder. The Tien-ti society sent emissaries to Sarawak to incite the gold-workers to destroy the Rajah and his government, and four days before the start of the trouble attempts were made to induce Spenser St. John's Chinese servants to join the society, giving as a reason that for the Bau kongsi was about to kill the Europeans. Nevertheless no one seems to have suspected that

anything really serious was afoot. At the last moment a friendly Malay tried to send a warning, but the Datu Bandar, when it reached him, refused to take it seriously:

"The disaster came upon us like a thief in the night," wrote Helms. "On the evening of the 18th of February 1857, the various bungalows which crowned the hills surrounding Kuching contained parties of joyous and hopeful men and women, but midnight had barely passed before fire and bloodshed covered the scene."

There are three main published accounts of the insurrection, written from the view-points of the Government, the Mission and the Borneo Company respectively. The third is the most vivid and detailed, since it is a diary which was kept at the time by Paul Tidman, a young man not yet twenty who had just arrived in Kuching to work for the Company.*

* Tidman remained in the Company's service some eight years, after which he returned to London and became a partner in the firm of Mactaggart & Tidman, East India Merchants. He and Helms remained friends for many years, and he was godfather to Helms' younger son. He died in 1889.

The second is by Mrs. McDougall and gives a somewhat different angle, since she was naturally mainly concerned with events as they affected those attached to the Mission. She, with other women and the children, was sent down to the mouth of the river by the Bishop on the afternoon of February 21. The Government account is by Spenser St. John, and was not written at first hand, since he was in Brunei at the time and collected his information later. I consider this to be the least reliable of the three.* It purposely

* This opinion was shared by the late Captain C.D. Le Gros Clark, who, when collecting information in 1936 for a projected book on Sarawak history wrote me: "St John is condemned by his own books. I have no patience with him and consider his evidence too unreliable to quote extensively, or without parallel confirmation from other sources."

minimises the parts played by the Bishop and the men of the

Company, for St. John never made any secret of the fact that he detested both. Possibly he had resented from the first the intrusion of organised religion and commerce into the charmed circle of early Brooke Sarawak life. Undoubtedly also, as already stated, his antipathy, as far as the Borneo Company went, had its roots in business happenings and intricacies of the past.

To these three accounts I can add a fourth, the draft of a letter which Helms started to write three days after the recapture of Kuching by the Borneo Company's steamer, with the object of informing his Directors in London of the situation. It was never completed, for apparently either on the day he began it, or just afterwards, he made up his mind that he must try and get to Singapore to consult with John Harvey, the manager of the Company's Singapore branch. He evidently intended to mail the letter from there, but he was asked by the Rajah to call at Sambas, in Dutch territory, to inform the authorities there of what had happened and ask their help in restoring law and order, and, as it turned out, he was not able to proceed to Singapore at once. When he returned to Kuching some three weeks later before starting the journey once more, the rebels had been disposed of by the attacks which he stated in the letter would be necessary. He kept the draft and later added to it a summary of the action he subsequently took. It gives a sober and factual account of the happenings, and of the difficulties with which he, responsible as he was to the Company, was faced. I will give this new narrative first and then consider the more picturesque details given by the other three, the third of which was the one he used when in later years he wrote his book Pioneering in the Far East.

"St: Sir James Brooke,
Sarawak River,

27th February 1857.

To the Directors of the Borneo Company Limtd,
25 Mincing Lane, London.

"Gentlemen,

"It has become my painful duty to convey to you the news of a very disastrous event which happened at midnight of the 18th to the 19th inst: when the town of Kutching was attacked and taken by a number of Chinese belonging to a settlement which as you are aware exists in the interior of Sarawak. The greater number of these people belong to a Goldworking Company, with administrative officers of their own, who not only arrange all their business matters, but to a great extent govern them and other Chinese of the same tribe, even though they may not belong to the Company. Their authority, though often not apparent is nevertheless great, for in the Secret Societies so extensively existing amongst the Chinese they have a powerful instrument for secret government. This desire for Self-government, and the facility with which they combine and organise themselves, requires a strong Government to rule them. This is not the first occasion upon which these people have opposed the Sarawak Govmt. Captain Brooke found it necessary four years ago to make an armed demonstration against them, nor did the event come without warning. It cannot be much over two months since the report of such an attack was brought here, it was said that a Path had been cut by the Chinese through the Jungle to enable them to approach Kutching, and the Govt. officer sent to enquire found that this was so. I doubt that an attack was then contemplated, but it should have warned the Govt: of the necessity for caution. The immediate cause of this attack appears to have been a fine which shortly after the above-named incident was imposed upon this Company for ascertained opium-smuggling, the amount was 25 buncals of gold,* - which fine was felt the more as it is notorious that the profits from goldwashing had for some time past been very small, barely affording the Chinese a living.

* Bongkal - a goldsmith's weight of \$2 (Straits.)

"This attack, as stated above, took place between the 18th and 19th inst: they came in Boats, to the number I believe of about 600 men. Their purpose was to kill Sir James Brooke and his two officers, Crookshank & Middleton, the one being the magistrate, the other the head of Police, but in which they fortunately failed, though they fired and utterly destroyed their respective houses and property. But I grieve to say that others perished, - your servant Wellington,* Nicholetts,* a young man in the Rajah's service, and two children of Middleton's were killed and Mr. and Mrs. Crookshank were wounded, the latter seriously, though I believe now out of

danger.

* Richard Wellington was a young metallurgist in the service of the Borneo Company. On its Roll of Honour of 35 names his is the first.

* Harry Nicholetts was the brother-in-law of the Rajah's niece Mary, Mrs. Gilbert Nicholetts.

The Fort or armed Police Station containing the arms and a large stock of gunpowder, was taken, (it was defended only by five natives and one European,) and thus supplied with large quantities of ammunition and arms they easily awed the native population, they indeed only thought of saving themselves and their families, as did the Europeans, and I amongst others hid myself during the night. Seeing however in the morning that the burning had been confined to the above three houses, I returned, and though fired upon was when recognised assured of safety. The Bishop also remained, and we attended a meeting called by the Rebel Leaders, which the Datu (Malay Chief) also was induced to attend. - They then stated that the attack was in revenge of Fines and other hardships they had suffered at the hands of the Govt: and that this having been taken they now wished to return, wanting only our assurance that there should be no retaliation for this deed. - For this we were compelled to become guarantee. They at the same time stated that all private property should be respected, and promised to return me some 6,500 dollars, which had been taken by them in the Fort where I kept it, which however, owing to subsequent events was not fulfilled.

"They did return next day, proposing that I should accompany them to become security for the fulfillment of the Agreement, but which I avoided by hiding myself, - this was on the 20th. Next day I returned. - On that day many Chinese were killed in the Jungle by Dyaks & Malays. They therefore returned a second time on the 21st, retook the place and burnt most of the Malay Town. The Rajah, who returned with the other gentlemen, (Fugitives with him,) just as the Chinese commenced the attack, left again for Linga, with all his Employés and their families, as well as the Bishop and those belonging to the Mission. I also left, but remained at the entrance of the River till the following day, when, as good luck would have it, the steamer Sir James Brooke came in. Capt. Skinner soon got his vessel ready for attack, and by the time these preparations were completed the Rajah, (who had seen the Steamer at sea,) joined us, and we retook Kutching the same night, (the 23rd,) the Chinese only giving themselves time to fire a few shots from the Fort none of which struck the boat, ours told better.

"Since then the Steamer has guarded the Town, nor can she with

safety be removed until the place has been put in a state of defence. When that may be I cannot now tell, - for the Malay population is scattered over the country looking to the security of their families. To my question as to the probable detention of the Steamer the Rajah could therefore not give me an answer. This question I did not put till the 26th, consequently three days after the Steamer's arrival, but as up to that time nothing had been done to provide for the security of the place, and nothing could be done before the Malays returned in force, - and their return being entirely voluntary, the Government having no means to enforce it, I did not think it compatible with my duty to the Company to remain passive and idly looking on. But I will endeavour to explain our position at the time at which I have now arrived...."

He goes on to describe clearly the geographical position and how the Chinese had managed to reach Kuching, and to report how, after the arrival of the steamer, the Datu Bandar with a select party of Malays, attacked those Chinese who had come in boats and routed them. A few were killed, the rest escaped into the jungle, and having rejoined the rest of the rebel force, started a retreat:

"Beyond Ledah Tanah they are fortifying themselves, the first place being Blida, which I understand they have strengthened, and which entirely commands the River, but this and other of their places will probably be taken by the Rajah. I expect indeed that the Chinese are only holding it till they have secured their retreat towards the interior, for in their old settlements they could not long maintain themselves after their supplies have been cut off.

"I have given you the above general sketch of affairs, in the hope that it may enable you more clearly to see our present position at Kutching, and that doing so you may form a correct opinion of the course which I, as your Agent, have taken, and determine the course which you yourself would choose for the future...."

We will now go back to the evening of February 18, and see how these events had come about. We find that the Rajah, who had had an attack of fever, was alone in his bungalow except for his manservant Charles Penty, and that Nicholetts and a young officer named Steele, on leave from their outlying forts of Lundu and Kanowit respectively, were sharing a small bungalow next to it.

These two houses and those of Crookshank and Middleton were on the left bank of the river, the Mission-house, Helms' bungalow and one or two others being on the right bank. Helms had some men to dinner that evening, his guests being Wellington, Nicholetts and Crymble, (who was in charge of the arsenal.) They left his house at about eleven, and a few hours later two of the three were dead.

Wellington lodged with the Middletons; Tidman was living at the Mission-house, for at that time the Borneo Company employés boarded out in different places; a house for their accommodation was in process of construction but was not yet finished.

Tidman's journal begins by telling how he was awakened at half-past-one in the morning and asked to get up and bring his gun, and how it was a wonder that he had not wakened sooner, as guns were firing and there was shouting and shrieking in the bazaar:

"Everyone downstairs was in a great state of excitement, the Bishop and the men-servants loading. 'The Chinese are down from Bau,' said the Bishop, 'and are attacking the town.'"

The Rajah's house was now in flames, and it was followed by those of Crookshank and Middleton. By the light of the fires those in the Mission-house could see crowds of Chinese, some with guns, but most of them with a weapon formed of an iron blade "something like a broadsword, either for cutting or thrusting, attached to a pole about four feet long." The Mission party, consisting of some six men with eight or nine women and children, were sure that they would be the next attacked. They all gathered in the dining-room and the Bishop said a short prayer and gave them a blessing:

"Then the women and children were put behind and the men were ranged in front, ready to fire when the assailants appeared."

Soon they heard that the old fort had been taken, and knew that unless the Malays made an attack on the Chinese the arsenal must go too. It soon followed the fate of the fort, and:

"In another half-hour the Bau Kungsi were masters of Sarawak, its forts and artillery, the firing became reduced to a single gun now and then from the new possessors of the fort."

The Chinese had landed on the left bank and first attacked the small bungalow next to that of the Rajah. When roused Steele got out at the back and made his way into the jungle, but young Nicholetts rushed out of the front door straight into their hands and was cut down immediately. The Rajah and Penty witnessed the murder from behind a venetian blind. "'Ah, Penty,' said the Rajah, 'it will be our turn next.'" (Jacob, 2, p.239.) However, at that moment he bethought himself of a possible way of escape through the bathroom, and while the Chinese gathered round the body of their victim the two men managed to slip out unseen. The Rajah swam the river and got to the house of the Datu Bandar, where he found Crookshank and also Crymble, who had fought his way out when the arsenal was captured. Penty, who could not swim, fled into the jungle and was taken to join Sir James by a party of Malays. Next morning they all walked to the junction of the little river Siol with the Santubong, and from here, in a large Malay war-boat, they started for the river Samarahan, the nearest river to the east of Kuching, the plan, in so far as there was one, being to collect a native force and organise an expedition from there. On their way they rested at a Malay village where they remained for some days.

Early on the morning of the 20th a party of Chinese came to the Mission-house, saying that their quarrel was with the Government and not with the Europeans generally. They asked the Bishop to go with them to treat their wounded, and they were followed by a man who brought the news that Mrs. Crookshank was lying wounded in the grass near her home. "The hatred which the Chinese had for Crookshank as magistrate was supreme, and the Bishop felt that any indiscreet act might induce them to make an

end of everybody." He therefore went to the fort to interview the Chinese leaders who had made it their headquarters, and asked if he might remove her. At first they refused, but the Bishop, who was not a man to give in easily, returned at last with their gracious permission:

"A party of Malays made a litter and carried Mrs. Crookshank to the house; she was ghastly pale, with wounds on her head, feet and hands, but her pluck was indomitable as she was carried upstairs, her dress crimsoned with her own blood. She had a bad spear-wound, but the Bishop was happily soon able to relieve us with the news that he had good hopes of her recovery. Spite of all her sufferings she was perfectly calm and collected and gave the story of the night from beginning to end."

Neither she nor her husband woke till the Chinese attacked their house. When roused they managed to slip out at the back by a door opposite the separate kitchen building. Crookshank put his wife in front of him hoping to conceal her from pursuers. But a Chinese, by running round the kitchen came upon her first, ran his spear into her and she fell. Crookshank closed with him and they fought for some minutes till both were exhausted. Then Crookshank, who was wounded in the shoulder and thought his wife dead, got away into the jungle and reached the house of the Datu Bandar. Mrs. Crookshank after a time managed to crawl away into some long grass where she stayed until found by some Chinese, who covered her to shield her from the sun and protected her until the Bishop was able to remove her to the Mission-house:

"All her rings, in which she was in the habit of sleeping, were taken from her hands, with the exception of her wedding-ring which could not be moved."

Many years later Raneë Margaret of Sarawak described Bertha Crookshank as being "not very tall, with a slim and graceful figure, an exceedingly pretty face with small delicate features and large lovely brown eyes, while her dark hair, smooth and abundant,

when unbound fell nearly to her feet." (Good Morning and Good Night, p.44.) This mass of hair, plainly to be seen in her photograph, tempered a blow on her neck and thus saved her life.

Meanwhile, at the Mission-house, all kinds of rumours were circulating. The Rajah, Crookshank, Helms and several others were said to be dead, but there was no certain news of any of them. Tidman determined to set out in search of Helms, and although the bazaar was crowded with Kungsi men who were keeping guard with rifles seized in the fort, he managed, by keeping up a bold front, to pass through the town to the Company's office. And here, to his great satisfaction, he met Helms and heard his adventures. Roused by the firing he had gone out onto his verandah and seen a large party of rebels coming up to the house. Being alone he thought discretion the better part of valour and slipped away to a Malay village in a valley beyond the Company's new house. Here he got a boat and crossed the river to consult with a leading Malay, in the endeavour to plan a defence. But the Malays could do nothing, "there was no one to lead them, no one to keep them together; neither the Rajah nor a single one of his officers was to be heard of," and actually it was not until the next day that they heard of the safety of all the Government party except young Nicholetts.

Helms crossed back again to the town next morning (20th,) and just as his boat was coming under the bank it was fired on. His Chinese boy called out that it was he who was in the boat, whereupon the men put up their guns and signed to Helms to come on shore, when they made him march with them to the Court-house. Here they requested that he, the Bishop, Ruppell and Tidman, should attend a conference, which he later described as follows:

"Though the Chinese were bent upon destroying the Sarawak Government they were afraid of interfering with purely British interests, and these were represented by two institutions, the

Church and commerce, - the former by Bishop McDougall and the latter by myself, and in this capacity we had, by order of the leaders of the insurgents, on the morrow of their acts of murder and arson, to meet them in the Court-house. It was an unpleasant meeting. In the Rajah's chair sat the head of the Gold-workers' Company, his subordinates on either side, while we and the Malay chief (who, by the insurgents' order I had with difficulty induced to attend,) occupied side-benches, while round the building surged the mass of excited Chinese."

St. John added the detail that the head of Nicholetts was being carried about on a pike outside, and that the rebels had been told that it was the head of the Rajah; the other accounts do not mention this incident.

To continue with Tidman's narrative:

"The Kungsi then stated their grievances, said that they did not wish to interfere with the Europeans in Sarawak, claimed immunity from taxes etc., and concluded by electing Helms Rajah. He was the popular man and stood a fair chance of being made a monarch; but as he continued respectfully to decline the honour it was at last arranged that the Bishop, Helms and Ruppell, should form a triumvirate; the Chinese should go up the river the same day, carrying all their plunder; that the Malays should not attack them, and that no steamer or boat should be sent up to the river in pursuit. Is it wonderful that these terms were agreed to? What else was to be done? The life of every English person in Sarawak was hanging by a thread, and we knew too well the result of resistance; besides, many in the Court-house were wanting harder terms, and it was thought the sooner over the better. And so all was yielded. Copies of the contract were drawn up in English, Chinese and Malay; these were all signed at once, Chinese fashion; two fowls are brought in, their heads cut off, and as they flutter about the table their blood is sprinkled over the documents. After this came tea and cigars, and when at last we left we were obliged to shake hands with the brutes whom with the greatest pleasure we could have shot dead upon the spot..."

The statement that the insurgents first tried to elect Helms Rajah, and then formed a triumvirate, is another of the incidents mentioned in only one source, but I believe Tidman's diary to be substantially correct as a record, if allowance is made for a certain youthful exuberance in the writing. Helms himself described

it thus:

"It is a record of first impressions, and recalls vividly the incidents of that exciting time, and I can bear testimony to the accuracy of the statements without committing myself to the reflections and deductions of the then youthful writer."

To this may be added the following quotation from the McDougall Memoirs, (p.149.). C.J. Bunyon wrote:

"Mr. Helms... gives a detailed and graphic account of what occurred in the form of a journal kept by an eye-witness whom he does not name, but whose truthfulness he attests, and for whom the author is now able to vouch as a gentleman of high character and unimpeachable veracity - the late Mr. Paul Tidman, who died while these pages were preparing for the press."

In any case there is no reason to give undue prominence to the happening. When we consider that the Chinese specifically stated that their quarrel was with the Sarawak Government and not with British interests; that Helms when recognised had been assured of safety; that the Bishop likewise had been able to move about freely; and that Helms, throughout his years in Sarawak always remained on very good terms with the traders of all races, it seems fairly obvious that the insurgents had a dim idea in their minds that by putting another European or more than one, in the Rajah's place, they might perhaps be able to protect their retreat should the tide turn against them. For the Bishop had already warned them that Charles Johnson and his Malays were not far away, and would certainly appear before long to take vengeance. It is also obvious that the four men could have taken no other action than they did, since they were without means of defence of any kind, and had they resisted a general massacre would have resulted.

It was after the Court-house meeting that the Chinese first suggested to Helms that he should accompany them up-river as a hostage, but he managed to get off and went back to his bungalow. Here, later in the day, Tidman went to look for him, and found with

him Mr. Manly (a Company employé,) and his wife and child, and the unfortunate Mrs. Middleton. A Chinese had come to Helms and informed him that she was in the jungle, and he at once followed the man and brought her back, "passing in so doing the still smouldering ruins of her home, where four dogs were tearing at something, he did not at that time even guess what".

Her experience had been a ghastly one. When the mob made their attack, her husband, thinking it directed against himself as head of police, rushed out by one door as the Chinese forced their way in through the other. Young Wellington tried to protect her and the two little boys, and he killed one man but was quickly shot down. His head was later found in the fort and taken by Tidman to the Mission-house, and the Bishop gave it burial. "He fell nobly," wrote Tidman, "for he could easily have saved himself had he chosen to do so."

After his death the two children were murdered and their heads kicked about the room. Mrs. Middleton, who had hidden herself in a water jar in the bathroom, stayed there until the house was set on fire and she was compelled to leave. Running into the jungle she hid herself in a pool of water, sitting in it up to her chin, till she saw a Chinese coming towards her who called out that he was a friend of her husband's and would fetch help.*

*According to Bishop McDougall Mrs. Middleton wished to leave Kuching in 1859, but she and her husband were mentioned by Captain Brooke in a letter written in August 1862, as living in the bungalow next to Government House, (Grant Papers.) Not long afterwards, however, Middleton seems to have been dismissed by Captain Brooke and then reinstated by Sir James. In a letter from Tidman to Helms, dated 24 February, 1863, occurs the following: "Peter had been met at Galle and brought back! 'I don't allow Mr. Brooke to dismiss my old servants' said the old party to me!" The background to this letter will be found in Chap. 16.

Next morning, (21st,) the Chinese could be seen carrying their

plunder down to the boats; cannon, rifles, plate and money, all were removed. Once more they tried to get Helms as a hostage, and once again he managed to evade them and disappeared temporarily, while Tidman carried an urgent message from the Bishop to the Datu Bandar, warning him not to take any action till a sufficient force could be got together. But it proved impossible completely to prevent premature Malay attacks; the son of the Datu Temanggong manned a boat and went in pursuit, killing several Chinese, and this was followed by further guerilla action, the Datu Bandar himself remaining in Kuching with his head-quarters on board a large trading prahu in the river.

That afternoon the Bishop decided that it would be wiser to send his wife and children, with Miss Woolley* and other helpers at

* Miss Woolley later married the Rev. W. Chambers, who succeeded Bishop McDougall as Bishop of Labuan and Sarawak.

the Mission down to the mouth of the river, where a small schooner, the Good Luck was lying, ready to sail for Singapore. Ruppell had already gone down to her "without saying a word to anyone,"* and there was still no news of Helms, only rumours that the Chinese had taken him with them, or that his dead body had been seen.

* Ruppell seems to have got away to Singapore in the Good Luck, and thenceforward disappears from Sarawak history. Tidman mentions that use was made of his bungalow later by the Rajah and others, "the owner, you must remember, having bolted from Sarawak, leaving his house open to everyone." Mr. Hentig, the planter, is another of whom no more is heard.

Once the men of the kongsi had gone the Chinese traders of the town became alarmed lest they should be attacked by the Malays, who were not in the mood to distinguish one Chinese from another. It was now that the Bishop took charge, and:

"But for him there would have been chaos. He was Commander-in-Chief and organised everything and kept us up to our work, as the

whole night through we had to walk about the town fully armed... A letter had come from the Rajah saying he would be up tomorrow with 'plenty of men,' and the prospect of this put us in good spirits. Occasionally during the night large boats passed up, and we began to think the Kungsi would get a good thrashing on their own ground."

Next morning Tidman heard positively that Helms had been seen on board the Good Luck, and he found himself for the moment the Company's only representative in Kuching. Their money had all been taken from the fort; there was a little in the office safe but Helms had the keys, and presently the Company coolies began asking for money and opium, and he feared a row. He applied to the Bishop, at whose request the leading Chinese traders agreed to make him advances, and while they had gone home for the money Helms returned. After evading the Chinese he had bolted to the Malay kampong. From there he watched the Chinese embarking and intended to come back as soon as the boats had left. But while waiting a boat brought him a note from the Rajah, as follows:

"The schooner Good Luck is down the river, hasten on board and write to Harvey to send us arms and ammunition. I will be with you tomorrow, meanwhile hold the fort."

In later life Helms bound the letters which he had received from James Brooke, Brooke Brooke and Charles Brooke, into a book. In this he wrote in the text of this note with the following comment:

"Such was the contents of a note written on a scrap of crumpled paper and bearing marks of the difficult conditions under which it was written, namely in a boat and he a Fugitive, having narrowly escaped during the previous night from his burning house. The original note is lost."

To hold the fort was, as Tidman remarked, rather like telling the Israelites to make bricks without straw. However, Helms saw the importance of this communication and that no time was to be lost. He went down the river, boarded the schooner and wrote to Harvey.

He found the McDougall party still in their own small boat, and since he expected the Rajah next day with an armed force he urged them to spare themselves the misery of a voyage in the densely packed ship. We have a graphic description from Mrs. McDougall of the flight of her party down the river and their finding that the schooner was so overcrowded that to take the journey in her would be quite impossible. "'Rather,' said Miss Woolley and I, 'die on shore than in that horrid schooner.'" So there they were in their boat with no one to row them, since the Kuching Chinese fugitives who had brought them down river had got themselves on board:

"At this moment a small boat pulled alongside and Mr. Helms' face appeared in the darkness. We were truly glad to see him, and he, faint and exhausted with wandering all day in the jungle, was thankful for a glass of wine which was soon got out of the provision basket."

For fortunately the Mission party had had food prepared for an expedition which was to have been made next day by the Rajah and the Bishop. Bread and rusks had been baked and salt meat cooked, and this was of the greatest importance to them later. "Then," goes on Mrs. McDougall, we opened a tin of soup and fed our tired and hungry children, who behaved all through these terrible days as if it was a picnic excursion got up for their amusement." (McDougall Memoirs, pp. 143-144.)

Helms got the party on shore and saw them settled as comfortably as possible in a Malay village. He then managed to get the first few hours sleep he had had for two days, before returning to Kuching. A delightfully gruesome touch concerning this stay in the village was recorded by Mrs. McDougall, as follows:

"The only thing that troubled me was a nasty faint smell for which I could not account; but next morning we found a Chinaman's head in a basket close by my corner, which was reason enough. We had taken a fine young man on board to help pull the sweeps, a Dayak, and this ghastly possession was his... It entirely spoilt my

hand-bag which lay near it, I had to throw it away and everything in it which could not be washed in hot water." (McDougall Memoirs, p.144.)

That evening those in Kuching heard that the Rajah was ready to come up, and the Bishop took a boat to meet and if possible hurry him, for it was becoming more and more evident that his absence was gravely aggravating the situation. An alarm was spread that the Chinese were on their way down again, and Tidman was ordered to take Mrs. Manly and Mrs. Middleton down the river with a view to hiding them in a Malay house. But the village proved to be deserted and it was impossible to leave them there. However, a little further on they came up with a large prahu belonging to a friendly Malay who was on board with his wife and family, ready to drop down to sea if necessary, and he willingly received them. Tidman pulled further down to take the news to the Rajah, and met the Bishop returning in a large war-boat:

"He had found the Rajah utterly depressed and hopeless, and with only one boat instead of 'plenty of men.' This was disheartening, but nothing checked the Bishop. He was not in the sweetest of tempers it must be owned. 'Come on board,' he called to me, 'if the Rajah deserts his country I must look after my diocese.' And so the twelve paddles struck the water and we flew up to the town. All the night we were sent from house to house with a party of Malays, searching for arms, of which we collected a large quantity; and all the night long the Bishop was about like the rest of us, keeping everyone together, encouraging everyone, and directing everything. Like us all he was armed to the teeth, with sword, double-barrel and revolver. He recalled the olden times, when Lord Bishops would strike a blow, if need were, in a good cause." (Tidman, quoted by Helms, Pioneering, p.179.)

Early on the morning of the 22nd they heard positively that the Chinese were about to make a fresh attack, as a reprisal for the killing of many Chinese in the jungle by Dyaks and Malays. Soon after this the Rajah's boat was seen coming up, but as she drew in to the bank at the Court-house some of the kongsi men came down the road and opened fire. Helms had collected the Company's sago-

coolies and Malays at the warehouse, and they expected the Malays to put up a stout fight. But they broke immediately, and the Rajah turned his war-boat down the river once more, the Bishop going with him. It was clear that all was up for the time. Helms saw his bungalow on the hill surrounded by Chinese, so he removed the books, papers and money from the office, and "joined in the grand stampede down the river."

Tidman has been accused of being unfair to Sir James in his narrative, and it is true that he did not stop to consider that while he, Helms and the Bishop, had been able to move about more or less freely, the Rajah, being the object of attack, could not do so, so that up to that time it had been difficult for him to take any counter-measures. On the other hand it is equally plain that all Europeans not in the Rajah's party were placed in a position of extreme difficulty and danger. It is more than probably that Bertha Crookshank owed her life to the Bishop, and it is also quite possible that Mrs. Middleton would have been killed had she not been brought to safety by Helms, though both women were saved, in the first place, by the humanity of individual Chinese. Many years later Charles Grant wrote to Helms on the publication of his book, and with reference to the diary made this observation.

"... Tidman's journal of the Chinese insurrection is very vivid, though he is somewhat hard on the old Rajah and per contra laudatory of others. You have, however, qualified this later on."

This qualifying statement was as follows:

"That the Rajah's behaviour on this occasion seemed at variance with his previous brave and chivalrous conduct, was doubtless the case; but if we consider that he was scarcely convalescent after an exhausting illness - that by a sudden blow he, in one night, saw the fruit of years of toil destroyed, his property given to the flames, and himself a hunted fugitive in the woods, disappointed in the support which he sought amongst the natives, - his failure, if such it was, to meet the occasion as it

required may well be overlooked. Still, those who were with the Rajah then and afterwards could not but think that a change had come over him which seemed to show itself in his subsequent conduct...."* (Helms, Pioneering, pp.213-214.)

* In this connection a letter from Admiral Hon. Henry Keppel to Helms, dated 27 March, 1882, has some relevance. He wrote: "I was not aware that Sir J. Brooke had ever been in so desponding a state as you describe him after the Chinese attack and conflagration, but it was hardly to be wondered at after the dreadful illness he had only partially recovered from."

And it was this change, later accentuated, which was to have so much influence on events yet to come. These were however, still some few years ahead. For the present we will return to the insurrection, and follow Helms and Tidman in their flight down the river.

Tidman's Malay servant had procured a small boat, and thoughtfully put his plaid, rug and knapsack into it. Helms joined him, and they were soon overtaken by a larger Dyak craft to which they transferred their things, taking the small boat in tow. By this time the flight had become general, - boats by the dozen were pulling down the river. The Chinese were again in possession of Kuching and soon they saw volumes of smoke rising from the town. A few miles further down they came up with a large three-masted prahu ready for sea and engaged it, with the idea of picking up the Europeans at the mouth of the river. They found the McDougall party still at the village, and then the Rajah arrived with the news that the Chinese were in full pursuit. "Double quick march was the order."

The Rajah with most of his party left once more for the Samarahan, with the parting order to Helms and Tidman: "Offer the country on any terms to the Dutch!" (Tidman, quoted by Helms, Pioneering, p. 181.)

The Bishop took possession of a pinnace belonging to Steele

which happened to be there, and by towing a small boat he managed to embark fifteen Europeans, (eight of the Mission-party and seven of the Rajah's, including Bertha Crookshank,) together with some of his native scholars and some Chinese Christians. They made for the fort of Lingga, on a river to the east occupied by a powerful and friendly Dyak tribe, where Charles Johnson was in charge. As it turned out this group was unable to return to Kuching until March 24, as means of transport were lacking, the small boat having been rendered useless by some accident. They suffered much from lack of food and from bad water, but Mrs. Crookshank made a complete recovery. (McDougall Memoirs, p.142.)

Helms and Tidman planned to try and reach Singapore in their prahu, and two of the women, Miss Woolley and another Mission helper, were entrusted to their care.

The first two parties got away immediately, but the third was compelled to anchor all night, since by the time everything was ready it was too late to cross the bar:

"Behold us then... the night is pitch-dark, and the rain coming down as it does only in the tropics. Helms and I are walking the deck, eagerly peering through the darkness and expecting that it might go hard with us yet. The ladies are below with the Malay women, enjoying the luxury of rice and salt fish; one of them, with the reasonableness peculiar to her sex, begs that if the Chinese do come we will let her know a quarter of an hour beforehand."

Next morning, however, there was no sign of the enemy; they were probably too much occupied in looting Kuching to think of pursuit. The boat-party decided to make for Serhassan, an island two days sail off the mainland, governed by a Rajah with whose help they hoped to be able to reach Singapore. But water and ballast had to be got in, so that the morning was well advanced before they got under way.

And now came a turning-point in the history of Brooke Sarawak.

The men were hoisting sail when a shout of "Kapalapi! Kapalapi!" (The steamer, the steamer!") brought everyone on deck, and there, just coming round the point, they could see smoke:

"Never has a more welcome sight been vouchsafed to anyone; the effect on us was quite beyond my power to describe... At first we took her for a Dutchman, and it looked as if we should be obliged to 'offer the country' as we had been bidden to do..."

But at last they could make out her flag and saw that she was indeed the Borneo Company's own vessel, the Sir James Brooke, arriving in the very nick of time. Helms and Tidman pulled off to her and it was some time before Captain Skinner recognised them, for they were in Malay dress and bronzed with exposure:

"Once on board we startled all with our intelligence. Helms, who was now Rajah nolens volens, decided on going up to the town at once, and the ladies were brought on board.

"Now came an exciting scene - the guns were got out, the rifles, cutlasses, etc., all piled, and the decks cleared, but while this was being done we saw a large boat making for the river which turned out to carry the Rajah, who had seen the smoke of the steamer far out at sea. The gloom and depression had passed away from the Rajah now, and everyone was in tearing spirits. The moment we opened the town we were exposed to the fort, and the guns opened on us with grape of original composition, - balls, nails, scraps of rusty iron came whizzing round...Two of the boats were struck, and the keel of the one above me was splintered in all directions. The next instant our long eighteen-pounder spoke his mind. Firing almost simultaneously with another gun of the same calibre the roar was a good one, and then came the sharper notes of the swivels and rifles.

"The shot from the gun forward, which was manned by the mate, went slap into the fort and created a scare. Out scoured the Chinese like wild hares in March, some dashing up the road, others running through the bazaar, affording practice for the riflemen on board. The new fort was quickly cleared and two or three more rounds completed the action. We steamed slowly up the river, on the side of which the Malay kampong was still burning, and then coming back again anchored off the bazaar. And thus the Company's steamer retook the town of Sarawak."* (Tidman Journal, quoted by Helms, Pioneering, pp. 183-184.)

* The town of Kuching, being the centre of 'Sarawak proper,'

was officially known as Sarawak until 1871.

Helms later painted the water-colour reproduced in this book, which is now in the possession of the Borneo Company. It shows the Sir James Brooke with her guns firing, and in the distance the Malay kampong can be seen in flames.

On the morning of the 24th a strong party was sent on shore to round up as many Chinese as possible, and they captured some twelve of them. The Malays could only be restrained with great difficulty from taking vengeance there and then, but the Rajah presided over a trial in the Court-house and only one man was condemned to death, the others being either remanded or liberated. The condemned man was dragged to the green close by, and then "almost as he was being beheaded five or six spears were sticking in his body."

The steamer became the Rajah's headquarters for the time, and it was now that Helms wrote the letter given earlier in this chapter. He then decided that he must get to Singapore, and the summary of the action which he took is as follows:

"After the 24th of February Sarawak was quiet, not however in the calm of security, but rather the lull after the abrupt ending of a storm which at any moment might break out again, - perhaps from another quarter. The Chinese were subdued, but passions had been aroused and lawlessness was abroad, the feeling of reliance on the Rajah's government which it had taken weary years to build up was at once destroyed. ... Round the Company's Steamer... armed Savages were passing and re-passing in war-canoes in restless activity, displaying their trophies of bloody chinese heads. The Steamer's guns were the only controlling force, the government was without resources, and the Rajah seemed cowed by his misfortunes and uncertain what was to be done. - I felt therefore that it would be necessary for me to consult with Mr. Harvey as to our course, and as it was impossible to remove the Steamer I resolved to perform the voyage to Singapore in an open boat, the only means left me, [Tidman says as his own pilot with five or six men.] I prepared to leave, and at the Rajah's request I undertook on my way to call at the dutch settlement Sambas, in order to apprise the authorities there of what had happened and solicit their

cooperation in restoring order and quiet."

Helms' description of the native warriors was amplified by Tidman, who wrote that during the period from February 28 to March 6, native boats came in daily. The Dyaks were mostly Skrang, with a few Saribas, and these were the head-hunters and pirates against whom expeditions had been frequent in the past, although by that time they had almost all submitted to the Rajah's authority:

"They are fine, strong fellows. Their bankongs (war-boats) are pulled by from twenty to thirty men, and in consequence go along at a great speed. They were decorated as customary on a war expedition, and the men wore their armlets and huge earrings. These redoubtable warriors were thirsting for heads. But as it was probable that if they went up-country by themselves they would not distinguish between hill-Dyaks and Chinese, they were induced to remain at Sarawak until the entire native fleet could arrive. They crowded the steamer from morning to night, examining everything and expressing great astonishment."

On March 9 those on board the steamer heard a distant shouting which, as it drew nearer, could be recognised as a "head sound." The Dyak boats were returning from a successful expedition against the main body of Chinese. Most of them were in too great a hurry to carry home the news of their victory to stop, only calling out: "Good news! We have heads!" as they swept past. But at length one boat pulled up and gave a confused account of what had happened, enough to make them feel that the scale was turning. And next morning the Datu Bandar came on board and gave a full report of the fight. He and two other Malay chiefs had gone up in three large war-boats, accompanied by several Dyak prahus, surprised the Chinese at Ledah Tanah and put them to flight. They scattered in all directions, and the fact that their force had comprised picked men of the kongsi greatly increased the confidence of the pursuers.

The Rajah now started up-river and was joined by Charles Johnson, arrived from his outpost with a number of men. They pushed

on up to Blidah, and a note was received at the steamer giving the news that Bau was burnt and the Chinese retreating towards Dutch territory. The Dyaks began to come back with their prizes and the cooking of heads began:

"The heads, after being cleaned, are hung over a slow fire and smoked; this effectually cures them, and they are then ready for stacking. Perhaps thirty heads were hanging in different parts of the bazaar...." (Tidman, quoted by Helms, Pioneering, p.189.)

On March 14 another letter was received from the Rajah, asking for volunteers, as the Chinese were expected to make a hand-to-hand resistance. A large party was at once formed in the steamer, including the mate, the engineers, Russell, (a Company man who had been in charge of the antimony mines at Bidi and had managed to save himself and his party by moving from one Dyak village to another for a fortnight,) and Tidman, with some of the crew. They were to go up with the midnight tide, and a boat with provisions was secured, but no men could be found to paddle. However, they got a crew next day and were all looking forward to some excitement when the Rajah and Johnson returned. The Chinese had suddenly abandoned their position and marched over a hill into Dutch territory.

Helms meanwhile had reached Sambas:

"I was received by the Resident there with great courtesy. But the headquarters of the dutch authorities in Borneo being in Pontianak, instructions had to be obtained from there. Having fulfilled my mission I desired to continue my voyage to Singapore in my boat. I therefore hired a native prahu which, though not a very promising craft, seemed to offer a better chance. But in this I was mistaken, we encountered a gale and lost all our sails except a jib, which however, as luck would have it enabled us to return to Sambas just as a dutch war-steamer arrived from Pontianak on her way to Sarawak, and under the circumstances I was glad to return in her.

"Arriving in Sarawak I found that the Rajah had established himself on shore in the fort, and had to some extent recovered

tone, - and he was able to receive the Dutch with a show of becoming confidence in his own resources. A few days later the Water Lily, a sailing vessel, arrived from Singapore, sent by the Borneo Company with the arms and supplies which I had ordered by the Good Luck.

"The Company wrote me as follows:- 'By this schooner we ship arms, ammunition and stores for the Sarawak Government, also specie for the account of the Borneo Company. Out of this remittance you will please furnish the Rajah with such sum of money as he may require, and generally you are authorised to place at the disposal of the Sarawak Government the whole resources of the Company in Borneo, so far as they may be made available for the upholding of the Government and the safety of the Europeans and other residents in the Rajah's territory.'"*

* The Company made Sir James a loan of £5000.

"I was now able to send away our Steamer and proceed in her myself to Singapore. Here the Raleigh frigate was lying with gallant Admiral Keppel on his way to China. I called upon him and told the tale of our troubles. The admiral had done much for Borneo, where his name was a household word. He had deeply interested himself in the work of Sir James Brooke, and he was therefore greatly moved by my story. Though unable to go himself he caused a ship of war, (the Spartan) to go across, and make a demonstration which had the best effect in calming the agitation. Accompanied by this vessel... I at once returned to Sarawak in our Steamer."

The last entry in Tidman's journal reads as follows:

"15th April. To-day witnessed the closing scene of the drama, a prahu decorated with flags and umbrellas, (the symbol of authority,) went up and down the river; a gong was beat, and then a man standing amidst the flags and umbrellas proclaimed peace and told us we might lock up our guns, for that nobody should hurt us any more."

The retreat of the Chinese was one of great suffering. The Dyaks pursued them nearly into Dutch territory, and when out of reach of the Dyaks they started fighting amongst themselves. The survivors were taken in charge by the Dutch authorities, who took from them any remaining loot and returned it to the Sarawak Government.

And so ended the Chinese Insurrection.

Chapter Ten

Rebuilding

The Chinese had been driven out of the country with great loss, and it was bound to be some time before they would feel themselves sufficiently safe from the Malay and Dyak populations to re-establish themselves in any number. But this in itself would impede development, for they were one of the most valuable sources of labour, and indeed, many of the constant difficulties from which the country and the Borneo Company suffered during the next few years are traceable to shortage of labour.

The material damage was considerable. The Rajah, Crookshank and Middleton had suffered the most among the European community, but the Mission-house also was sacked. The Malay town had been destroyed. The most serious loss was that of the Rajah's "noble library," since that, under the circumstances, could never be more than partially replaced. His private papers had also gone. But new houses were soon erected and the Malays rebuilt their kampong. Friends in England sent out a "goodly number of books," and a subscription was started, headed by the Borneo Company with a donation of a thousand pounds, "in gratitude for the Rajah's escape, in sympathy for his losses, and above all to mark the sense of the services he had rendered the cause of civilisation." (Jacob, 2, p.246.)

However, though the Chinese danger was removed, there were still the usual intrigues amongst the native chiefs, sometimes against the Government, sometimes against each other, holding back the re-establishment of settled conditions, and necessitating

constant expeditions by Government officers. Thus, a few months after peace was restored, the Rajah's two nephews, Brooke Brooke (who had now returned,) and Charles Johnson, being absent in different parts of the country, Sir James himself found it necessary to go to Sarebas where there had been trouble on and off for years. Here he persuaded the whole Malay population to remove to the mouth of the river, a remarkable achievement which "snapped many chains of intrigue with the interior." (Jacob, 2, p.250.) The following note obviously refers to the preparations for this undertaking, though undated and written in haste:

"In Court.

"My dear Helms, - The removal of the Sarebas chiefs is a solemn and profound secret, and on no account to be mentioned, whether we can get them is doubtful, yet, when we have caught our bird we may think of the way we have to proceed with it. This vast measure depends upon Seba suffering them to be obedient...* Pray do not talk of the matter to anyone likely to divulge it...

"Yours sinclly,

J. Brooke."

* Presumably Seba was one of the Malay chiefs, but I have not found the name mentioned anywhere else.

Later in the year, in September, the Rajah went to Brunei to interview the Sultan, and Helms accompanied him. The districts of Muka and Dya were suffering severely through a feud between rival chiefs which was not only bringing much misery to the native population, but was also detrimental to the sago-trade which Helms was fostering. Since both districts were still part of the Sultan's domain Sir James had no authority to interfere directly, but he obtained it on this visit, and on the return journey he called at Muka. Here he intended to try and put an end to the feud between the Pangerans Dipa and Matussin, the latter having killed Dipa's father. The prospect of settling a quarrel of this kind seemed slight, but it was arranged that the rival factions should meet

before him and Helms and an unnamed Singapore friend accompanied him on shore:

"The Rajah received the two chiefs and their followers ranged on each side of a long-house. All were armed and the experiment seemed a dangerous one; the Rajah evidently thought so too, for once his hand moved down to a concealed revolver. But the meeting passed off peacefully, - the Rajah's pleasing eloquence having its usual quieting effect. To have brought two such parties face to face, without resort to arms, was a feat which those who know what blood feuds mean will appreciate." (Helms, Pioneering, p.195.)

To reconcile the two men was impossible; nevertheless the Rajah got what he wanted, and wrote to John Templer:

"The impression I wished was produced. If the Rajas fight they will not have backing, and the people will look to me more and more. Thus two points are won: 1. The Trade secured: 2. My authority to interfere granted. It is a great gain and a relief to my mind." (Jacob, 2, 260-1.)

After this minor triumph the Rajah decided to take a trip to England. Just before his departure he wrote another letter to Templer in which he said:

"There is another reason which inclines me always to absent myself from Sarawak, and it is that Brooke may again take his proper position and administer the Government. It is difficult to effect the change when I am here. After an absence it is more easy to keep aloof from affairs. I like to see him the 'Lord who rules.'* The change which must be at my death I am desirous should be prepared for, if not effected, while I yet live. I leave the Government with confidence." (Jacob, 2, p.262.)

* Evidently a reference to the Malay title Yang di-Pertuan = monarch, sovereign, the lord who rules.

He goes on to state his reasons for believing that the revenue of the country was recovering:

"We get about £10,000 per annum. Antimony will add a thousand after next year, coal ditto: Chinese are steadily coming in from Sambas and with population revenue improves."

Although Helms was not quite as optimistic as this, and though the coal prospects in particular were to prove largely illusory, life in Sarawak seems on the whole to have been very pleasant

during the latter months of 1857.

Brooke Brooke and Charles Grant had arrived in Kuching with their brides soon after the end of the rising. With them came the Rajah's niece, Mrs. Nicholetts, and a new recruit, Robert Hay, of whom more is heard later. The Grants brought a piano, someone played the violin, others sang, there were pleasant evenings after the exertions of the day.

At the time of Captain Brooke's marriage in 1856 to Charles Grant's sister Annie, daughter of Mr. Grant of Kilgraston, Perthshire, Sir James gave the latter "the fullest written pledges that nothing should interfere between Mr. Brooke and the inheritance of Sarawak." (Helms, Pioneering, p.216.) The letter in which he did so is to be found in Captain Brooke's own pamphlet, but no writer except Helms has ever quoted it, though having regard to subsequent events it was of the utmost importance, and could scarcely have been more explicit.

The relevant passages were as follows:

"My marriage is a most improbable event, and shall not stand in the way.

"First, then: Brooke's succession is not only legally secured, but positively confirmed by the people.

"Second: the Government will make a sufficient allowance for Brooke's proper maintenance.

"Third: the provision for the widow and the children shall be considered directly Brooke returns.

"Fourth: the succession in the direct line is acknowledged, but an infant coming into the succession must be dependent on his natural guardians, and on the degree of respect which the people at large would pay to the arrangements of a deceased ruler. The case would be the same, whether my son were entrusted to Brooke's guardianship, or his sons to the guardianship of his brother, Charles Johnson; and in either case I should have a perfect confidence in the stability of the arrangement, for I am sure their faith and honour would be above temptation." (A Statement Regarding Sarawak, J. Brooke Brooke. Quoted by Helms, Pioneering, p.216.)

In September 1857 the Brooke Brooke's first child, a son, was

born, and the Grants had a daughter at about the same time. These two babies, evidently occasioned the following note, though it is undated:

"Monday.

"My dear Helms, - We shall be ready any hour on Thursday, so pray fix your day. If the steamer sail on Thursday* the Children will be christened on Wednesday, when we hope to see you all in the evening. If on Friday the party will be on Thursday.

"Yours ever,
J. Brooke."

* The steamer referred to was that of the Borneo Co. The Rajah was to go across to Singapore in her, on his way back to England.

The christening took place in the little timber church of St. Thomas of which the foundation stone was laid in August 1848, though it was not consecrated until January 1851. It was built largely of billian or ironwood, which takes a high polish, and is so hard as to be practically impervious to the effects of atmosphere, water, or white ants. The walls were painted white, and the furnishings, pulpit, reading-desk and chairs, had been made in Singapore to the order of Bishop (then still Mr.) McDougall. The east window was of painted glass, showing in the centre-light the cross of the Sarawak flag, (itself taken from the Brooke arms,) deep purple and red on a golden ground. All the plans and drawings for the building were made by the McDougalls themselves, and it was erected by Chinese workmen under the supervision of a German overseer, a former ship's carpenter.*

* McDougall Memoirs, p.71. Harriette McDougall, Letters from Sarawak, pp. 86-87½ Mrs. McDougall, who was an accomplished artist, painted a water-colour of the interior of the church which can be seen in the archives of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel.

In this church all the European children born in those early days, as well as the Mission converts, were baptised in the font

which was a very large white shell, "so large that a baby could be dipped into it if need be." This stood on a wooden pedestal which Mrs. McDougall had wanted to be carved as a branch of coral, but the carpenter could not manage it, and she had to be content with a fluted column.*

* For the ultimate fate of this church see note 3 in the Appendix, by Mr. Tom Harrisson.

Harriette McDougall left a record of the double christening in a letter dated October 21, 1857, in which she says that she has been ill and is therefore staying at home and writing, instead of going to the grand christening party at the Brookes:

"The baptism of the two cousins took place this afternoon and a very pretty sight it was. The church was decked with flowers and moss; all the English were there and a great many Malays and Chinese, and the little church was full. Frank baptised the children - Lucy Blanche Cordelia Grant and Francis Basil Brooke. Both the little ones were beautifully dressed and looked very lovely. The Rajah and the two Charleys [Johnson and Grant,] and the Crookshanks and the Helms party came home to us to dinner, and then they all went across till midnight." (McDougall, Memoirs, p.167.)

One can imagine how such an event as this, with its gay evening gathering, must have been looked forward to as making a pleasant break.

To this autumn belongs also the following note from Captain Brooke which explains itself:

"Sarawak Govt. Office,
Oct. 12th, 1857.

"My dear Helms,

"I don't know whether you have a grant for the land on wh. your house stands, but if not I wd recommend you getting one before the Rajah leaves, and registering it in the book kept in the Gvt. Office for the purpose. Billian or stone landmarks should be set up.*

"I remain truly yours,
J. Brooke Brooke.

* This house was the successor to the "little box of palm

leaves." Helms acted promptly, for its title was No. 1. in the Court House Register still preserved by the Land & Surveys Department. (Information from the Borneo Co. Ltd.)

The Rajah left the day after the christening, leaving the government in charge of Captain Brooke, and in the following year Helms decided that he too must take a trip back to Europe. His arrangements with the company were not satisfactory and required adjustment if he was to remain in Borneo; an interview with the Directors was necessary. Also, after eleven years in the East his health had suffered from the climate, and from the exertions and anxieties inseparable from his work in a country still so largely unsettled. He therefore left Sarawak in June 1858, being as he says: "In no hurry to get to Europe, but inclined to enjoy a dolce far niente sort of life." The Company appointed a Mr. Duguid from the Singapore branch to take charge during his absence. Shortly before he left he received the following note from Captain Brooke which is of some interest:

"Sibujan,
June 4th.

"My dear Helms,

"In case of your having returned to Sarawak I write a line to say that we have letters from Steele urging us to hasten to his assistance, as a very formidable attack is about to be made on his Fort. I have written to Mr. Duguid to say how important it is that we shd be reinforced by the Steamer with the utmost despatch. In taking into consideration the urgent necessity that exists for her services I hope in the event of your being in Sarawak you will hasten her off to our assistance on your own responsibility. I need not say how damaging any reverse just now wld be to our influence on the coast.

"Yours truly,
J. Brooke Brooke."

Helms added the following note: "This letter did not reach me as I was absent," (no doubt at the mines or elsewhere seeing that all was in order before his departure a fortnight later.) "The

threatened attack was then averted, but later Steele and Fox were both murdered in the Fort." This murder took place in June of the following year, the fort being the outlying station of Kanowit. It was the first move in a deep-laid Malay conspiracy.

In Singapore Helms ran into Christian Lange, nephew of his old chief. He was there with his brig Gruda and suggested a run down to Bali, an offer which Helms gladly accepted. The brig had excellent accommodation; he was made very comfortable and had a delightful passage. On the thirteenth day they made the coast of Java, and at Sourabaya Helms left the ship to wait for the Venus which Hans Lange was sending from Bali to fetch him.

"Java is rightly called the garden of the Far East," he wrote, "and the place of all others for a weary man who wishes to rest, a place where he may indulge in luxurious repose undisturbed by anything that is going on around him. I could have wished myself a Dutchman that I might roam at pleasure over the lovely country, but not being able to pass myself off for one I could not get permission to go into the interior, and had to confine myself to excursions in the environs of Sourabaya which, though pretty, was not new to me as I had spent some time there in 1849. I stayed for ten days, of which however I made the most, and renewed my opinion of the Dutch, to the effect that, though officially harsh, they are individually the most pleasant and hospitable people."

Leaving Sourabaya on September 17th he sailed leisurely and pleasantly along the coast of Java; landing every now and then. There was a good cook and every comfort on board the Venus, and he passed much time on deck, reading, well protected from the sun by awnings. The fifth day brought him to Bali Strait. They called at Banjuwangi where, in the old days, Mads Lange had had a house, and then stood across the strait for Bali:

"The pleasure of visiting old familiar places and friends after many years absence is alloyed with sadness caused by the sight of the changes time has wrought, and I felt something of the kind when landing at Bali. The place was in the main the same, but I saw a great change in the people and I felt it in myself. A few

ships were loading, but a languor and listlessness seemed to prevail, very different from the early days of my sojourn there. But there was cause for this. The mastermind was gone, Mads Lange was dead.... He died, still in the vigour of manhood and I returned only to find his lonely grave instead of the friendship I had hoped to renew."

Thus Helms' stay in Bali turned out otherwise than he had pictured it. Besides the natural sadness which he felt at the loss of Lange the season was a very unhealthy one, with much sickness. Out of the five Europeans who now formed the establishment two died while he was there, and a third was gravely ill. He sickened himself, but not seriously, and to help the Langes in this emergency he prolonged his stay for six weeks. Then Hans asked him if he would be willing to continue his journey by way of Australia, to deliver the cargo of a ship which he was loading but was too ill to accompany himself as he had planned to do:

"Everything considered the plan seemed a good one, it secured me a health-giving voyage in a fine ship, and an opportunity of seeing Australia. On the 8th of November I embarked in the Stately, and soon the coast of Bali faded on the horizon."

The voyage started with a fair wind, but this did not last:

"It soon veered to the south, and we had to beat down against it and eventually to go south of Tasmania, instead of through Bass Strait as we had intended. We experienced a heavy gale and sea which broke a stern port, flooded the saloon, and for a while threatened the safety of the ship."

But his health improved and he was soon able to eat pea-soup, salt junk and plum duff with relish. The journey, however, was a lonely one. He was the only passenger, and during the whole voyage they saw only one sail.

When he came on deck on the morning of December 24 they were within a few miles of a barren coast. To one accustomed to the well-wooded shores of the East Indian islands the frowning, rocky cliffs, apparently without bush or shrub, appeared most desolate. And the air of desolation was increased by the heavy pall of smoke

which hung over the land from bush fires raging in the interior:

"Great therefore was my surprise to learn that where no break as yet was visible in the rocky wall, was the harbour of Sydney. But for the lighthouse right ahead I could scarcely have believed it. As we got closer in, an opening became visible between two abrupt headlands, but still it only seemed an insignificant bay, as Cook had deemed it when, after surveying Botany Bay, he passed this harbour unnoticed.

"When close to the gap we took a pilot on board; there was hardly wind enough to make the ship manageable, but her head was directed towards the opening. The current, however, swept us so close under the south head that we had to let go the anchor, and not too soon, as we were close to the rocks, and if a breeze had sprung up before a steamer could come to tow us off, our fate, at least as far as the ship went, would have been that of the Duncan Dunbar, lost on these same rocks, when out of two hundred passengers only one man escaped. The pilot showed me the identical bit of shelving rock on which this man had been thrown, and thus miraculously saved his life... At last a steam-tug came and we escaped with the loss of an anchor. In another hour we were in the harbour, amidst a fleet of the most famous clipper-ships of Great Britain and America.

"Sydney had quite the appearance of an English town... The streets were crowded, for it was Christmas Eve, and the festive season was visible in the abundant supply of good cheer temptingly displayed. The fruit-stalls in particular offered a sight such as few countries can equal for variety.

"I put up at an hotel near the Botanical Gardens, in which I could enjoy a morning walk, followed by coffee in the French café close by. But I soon met with friends. I had an introduction to Mr. B. to whom I consigned the ship's cargo, and he and his pretty young wife* made my stay very pleasant. In future years we met again amongst the mountains of Switzerland, and eventually closer ties connected us.

* "Mr. B. and his pretty young wife" were the Mr. and Mrs. Henry Beauchamp whose youngest child, Mary Annette (May,) was, as Countess von Arnim, to become famous as the writer of Elizabeth and her German Garden. Their youngest son, Harry, married Helms' daughter Katherine.

Leaving Sydney Helms went on to Melbourne, where he stayed a fortnight, making trips to the principal gold diggings, which were naturally of much interest to him. Then he embarked in the Royal

Mail steamer Oneida for what was to be a "very pleasant voyage." In the previous year a railway had been opened in Egypt; passengers disembarked at Suez and travelled by train through Cairo to the Mediterranean, thus considerably shortening the journey to Europe.

Chapter Eleven

The Lady in Love with Sarawak

While Helms was being borne towards Australia in the Stateley a tragic event took place in Sarawak. Brooke Brooke's young wife died, twelve days after giving birth to her second child on November 5, (1858) a boy who was named John Charles Evelyn Hope. The little church where the happy christenings had taken place just over a year earlier was the scene of the funeral, vividly described by Mrs. McDougall to her brother in England:

"... Annie was buried the day she died, in the afternoon... and the whole place is in mourning. The scramble to get some black ready the very same day - hanging the church, practising the funeral chant, and other preparations, made it such a hurry... The church was crowded with natives, guns fired all the time, the coffin was carried by eight Englishmen and covered with a large flag from Frank's cutter, with a cross on it, and I placed a wreath of white flowers upon it. She loved flowers so dearly... Dear Brooke takes his trouble with real Christian patience and gentleness; but who can comfort him? It is a bitter thing for a young man to be left a widower, and he has so many other cares too." (McDougall Memoirs, pp. 180-181.)

Captain Brooke, after his bereavement, felt that he must leave the country for a time, more especially since news had come from England that the Rajah had suffered a stroke in the previous month, and at first it was thought by his friends that his active life must necessarily be over. Leaving the government in charge of his brother, Brooke sailed, and to Helms' surprise he found him already in London when he himself arrived there on March 13, (1859.)

Sir James, as we know, had been in England for about fifteen months, and the year 1858 had produced developments which were to have an important influence on later happenings.

The first was that the young man "George" who claimed to be the Rajah's illegitimate son, came into the picture. The matter is fully dealt with by Emily Hahn in James Brooke of Sarawak, the first time that any writer has sought to explain the cryptic references to someone of that name which appear here and there in Sir James' correspondence.

The sudden appearance of George seems to have greatly upset the Rajah's relatives and old friends, who had no knowledge of his existence, and were inclined to believe him an impostor. And it seems doubtful whether Sir James himself had suspected that he had a child. However, he accepted him immediately as his son and early in 1858 announced that he proposed to send him out to Sarawak. To Captain Brooke, wrestling with the many difficulties, both administrative and financial, which the charge of Sarawak entailed at that time, the prospect of George being landed on him with the Rajah's backing was one that he could view only with dismay. For one thing he feared, not unnaturally, that George might cause complications and conceivably supplant him in the end. For another, George would be totally unprepared for such a career, and he wrote to his uncle on March 14, 1858:

"Nor do I believe that this young man, if he knew what life in Sarawak meant, wd wish for a moment to embrace it. Anxiety, penury and the sacrifice of almost everything that an Englishman holds dear is our lot here, which we willingly accept, having a grand object in view." (Emily Hahn, James Brooke of Sarawak, p.225.)

To which the Rajah, thinking better of his strange idea, answered assuring him that in no possible circumstances could George ever succeed to the Raj, and there the matter rested. It seems, however, to have been the first link in the long chain of vacillations, inconsistencies, uncertainties and contradictions, which made Brooke Brooke's position more and more difficult from that time onwards.

The second happening was more far-reaching in its effects, and seen from this distance in time its importance cannot be over-estimated. It brought onto the stage the last important member of the caste of the dynastic drama of Sarawak. Sir James met Miss Burdett Coutts once more. It is clear from his first recorded letter to her, accepting an invitation to dine, and dated 14 January, 1858, that she had written congratulating him on his escape from the Chinese and suggesting that they should renew a former acquaintance. Their subsequent correspondence,* extending

* Published in 1936 under the title Rajah Brooke and Baroness Burdett Coutts. Edited by Owen Rutter. This book is indispensable to an understanding of the events of the next few years.

over the next ten years until his death, makes it clear that she became the dominant influence in his life, and that while her efforts secured for him in the end the recognition of Sarawak, and her help tided him over the worst of his financial difficulties, it was also she who brought about the break with his elder nephew, and gradually estranged him from his old friends.

In 1858 Angela Burdett Coutts was forty-four, having been born on the 21st April 1814. By the second wife of her grandfather, Thomas Coutts, who with his brother James developed the banking house of Coutts, she had been left sole heiress at the age of twenty-three to his immense fortune. She was so far unmarried. She had a house in Stratton Street, Piccadilly, another, Holly Lodge, at Highgate, and a third, Ehrenburg Hall, at Torquay, and her activities were shared by her friend and companion Mrs. Harriet Brown, who lived with her, and whose influence over her should not, I think, be underestimated. She devoted herself to good causes of all kinds and endless philanthropic and religious schemes. She did much to relieve suffering and distress among the poor, and she was one of the first to work for animal welfare, in days when few

people cared about such things. For all this her name may well be remembered with gratitude. Had she been as charitable in personal relationships as in public philanthropy, a tragedy which was to affect more lives than one might have been avoided.

Like many women with undisputed command of wealth she liked to play a leading role in events, and the romantic figure of James Brooke, and still more his romantic position in a romantic land, very naturally attracted her. Sarawak, its ruler and its future, became her all-absorbing hobby. A modern psychologist would perhaps say that she developed a power complex in that direction.

Sarawak affairs were never at a lower ebb than they were after the Chinese rising, in spite of the Rajah's optimistic letter to John Templer in the autumn of 1857. Always dogged by financial worries the government was, at that time, particularly vulnerable. The Borneo Company had asked for the repayment of its loan of £5000. "It was perhaps not in a generous mood," comments Helms about its policy in general at that time. But, as he pointed out more than once, a company is responsible to the shareholders who invest their money in its undertakings, and the insurrection had dealt the Borneo Company a deadly blow right at the start of its operations. Indeed, some of the Directors were for cutting their losses and abandoning the enterprise altogether, and the withdrawal of the Company would mean, in the words of Gertrude Jacob:

"... if not the financial ruin of Sarawak very little less, for under such circumstances fresh capital could hardly be attracted. Rightly or wrongly the Directors attributed their difficulties to the weakness of the Sarawak Government." (Jacob, 2, p.302.)

On his arrival in England in 1857 the Rajah had begun negotiating to have Sarawak recognised, either as a Crown Colony, or as a Protectorate. When at last the British Government made a tentative move towards a protectorate he persisted, against the

advice of many of his old friends, (Brooke Brooke's father-in-law, Mr. Grant of Kilgraston, was one,) in demanding immediate compensation for the expenditure of his private fortune, and when the Government suggested setting up a naval base in Sarawak he made the acceptance of this proposal likewise dependent on a financial settlement. This delayed the negotiations, the Government fell in February, (1858,) and Lord Derby, who became Prime Minister, did not approve of the plan at all. Once again the question of the status of Sarawak was relegated indefinitely. Sir James considered himself ill used, "became a man with a grievance," says Helms, "and wrote and spoke of the Government in terms which showed that he no longer judged with the calmness and patience of former days." (Helms, Pioneering, p.220.) He played more and more with the idea of obtaining protection from a foreign power, possibly Holland or France.

Miss Coutts saw in all this a wonderful outlet for her energies. Contemporary writers could not, of course, mention her by name; she was "a friend" or "a generous friend." Those who wrote later have suggested that she herself preferred that her generosity should not be discussed. But it might equally well be said that fear of libel suits or kindred unpleasantness effectually silenced both tongues and pens. Romantics have endeavoured to show that she was in love with Sir James and for that reason helped him as she did. But a study of their correspondence shows, I think, that it was not James she was in love with but Sarawak itself. She might have married him had he asked her, for the glamorous title and position of Ranee of Sarawak probably appeared attractive, but in any case she seems to have determined that, married to him or not, Sarawak affairs should go as she wished them to go.

If we remember the change which Helms noticed in the Rajah at

the time of the insurrection, and if we add to this the effects of the stroke which he suffered in October of the same year, it becomes clear that he was no longer the man he had been, either physically or mentally; this may be the fate of anyone, however gifted in his prime, nor is there any disgrace attached to such a happening. But the situation was ripe for him to fall under the influence of any personality sufficiently dominating, and Angela Burdett Coutts was such a personality. With the power given her by her great wealth, it was impossible for others to oppose her successfully, and in the end all involved in the tangle were divided into two camps, those who acquiesced willingly in the situation and turned it to their own advantage, and those who did not but were powerless to alter it.

On Captain Brooke's return to England early in 1859 Sir James entrusted him with all business relating to Sarawak, having written on December 4, (1858,) a letter to John Templer in which one sentence reads: "On my part I desire only to die, or to live in quiet. I have resigned my Raj to my successor..." (Jacob, 2, p.300.) And this brings us to the question of the Testimonial.

Since after Sir James' stroke it was generally supposed that he would be compelled to retire from active life, and since he frequently expressed his wish to do so, a group of his friends, headed by Mr. (later Sir) Thomas Fairbairn, decided to raise a fund to free him from personal financial worry and enable him to resign, and also "to prevent him raising the necessary funds by negotiating with France." (J. Brooke Brooke, A Statement Regarding Sarawak; quoted by Helms, Pioneering, p.226.) The Committee aimed at raising £20,000 and keeping the matter a private one, but this naturally limited subscriptions, and in December 1858 Templer wrote to Sir James saying that the hoped-for amount was not being reached, and

telling him at the same time of a serious state of affairs with regard to the Borneo Company:

"The China mail had brought the usual tidings from Sarawak of stagnation from want of labour, and two of the directors stated in consequence their intention of withdrawing their capital." (Jacob, 2, p.303.)

A plan had been outlined by the others by which fresh capital might be brought in through the formation of a new company to be called the Sarawak Company, to:

"... work under the wing of the old one, buy from the Rajah his 'right under the Sultan,' put a steamer on the coast, and if, or when Sir James Brooke's health forced him to retire, to take the government into its own hands and appoint its own governor." (Jacob, 2, p.303.)

Matters never got as far as the naming of a governor, but Captain Brooke's retirement was suggested as advisable. This has been interpreted by Emily Hahn, (James Brooke of Sarawak, p.232.) as being because Brooke Brooke himself had "got on the wrong side of some of their men," but it seems rather to have been with the idea of terminating the Brooke dynasty, in order to have a free hand to run the country on whatever lines the Company might find most satisfactory.

This proposal drew from the Rajah a letter to Templer dated 17 December, in which he categorically stated that:

"Brooke's position and my own are identical and they cannot be considered separately. The Government of Sarawak has been established for sixteen years; the system works well, the laws are defined and in operation, and Brooke has been the ruler and has the confidence of the people... Brooke's retirement would entail the retirement of his brother and C. Grant and all would be confusion...."

And again:

"Brooke is the Rajah of Sarawak, and my love and confidence in him are so entire that I could never do anything to hurt his feelings, much more to injure his rights of succession or inheritance... How do you imagine Sarawak is to be secured to

England by the overthrow of the existing system, and a change of government which would strike at the root of native confidence?..." (Jacob, 2, p.304.)

It is obvious that Captain Brooke was not in favour of any arrangement with the British Government or anyone else which might end his own career, and very naturally so, since his whole life was bound up with Sarawak. He wanted his uncle to give him a free hand at settling matters on his own responsibility, and it is also obvious that from a purely business and commonsense point of view this would have been the sensible course at that time.

Two days after writing to Templer, on December 19, the Rajah wrote to his nephew, evidently in answer to a letter which had made certain suggestions as to the future of the country. Although young Mrs. Brooke was already dead when the Rajah's letter was written, no news of her death, or of Captain Brooke's intended journey, would yet have reached England, owing to the length of time taken by the mails. This letter was later published by Captain Brooke in his own pamphlet and quoted by Helms, (Pioneering, p.221.) It contained this passage:

"Under these circumstances then, you cannot expect that I should resign my authority into your hands until I am certain your views for the future are consistent with the improvement of the country, or until, (the people being willing to back you,) a small portion of the debt due to me shall be repaid, so as to release me from risks which I deprecate as ruin."

It goes on to state with precision the financial terms on which, in December 1858, the Rajah was ready to abdicate, namely, a lump sum of £10,000, an annuity of £500 to £700, and:

"... after my death £200 a year for George's life. Here are the terms of my abdication, presuming the people, i.e. the Council and Abang Abangs approve, I will then formally transfer my power to you, and when you have formally accepted the responsibility, may God help you."

A third letter, dated four days later on 22 December, is to

his younger nephew, Charles Johnson. It runs:

"I yield, however, to Brooke's views and wishes, on certain conditions; for I feel that I would willingly hamper the state no longer. But Sarawak must not be endangered by any personal feeling or nationality of its ruler. If there be a fair prospect of safety, let Brooke try his hand; but at the same time, I must be relieved from the anxieties and responsibilities of my office." (Quoted by Helms, Pioneering, pp.228-229.)

With regard to the Borneo Company it is plain that there had been strong cross-currents within it, and the new plan came to nothing. It was decided to persevere without alteration, with Robert Henderson remaining Chairman. And in January 1859 the question of a loan, interest-free, from Miss Coutts, to pay off the debt to the Company, was first discussed between her and Sir James. This was finally settled some two or three months later when he visited her at Torquay.

Since it proved impossible to raise sufficient money for the Testimonial privately, Sir James' friends determined to launch a public subscription. He expressed himself in favour of the idea, and wrote to Captain Brooke on 11 March, (1859:)

"If no more is to be had £5000 will satisfy me as a return for my private fortune, but I should like £10,000. I say too that it is my wish and intention, provided this arrangement for money can be made, to resign the Government into your hands. I will be an adviser when you want me." (Captain Brooke's Pamphlet, quoted by Helms, Pioneering, p.226.)

It will be noticed that this second letter gives a lump sum of half the size of that mentioned in Sir James' letter of three months earlier and makes no mention of an annuity. This became important later because the Rajah maintained that the conditions named in the first letter had not been fulfilled, while Captain Brooke maintained that the second, made at the time of the launching of the public subscription, might be taken as the definitive one, and that the money was to be raised "on the

understanding that the proposed fund should not fall short of £5000." (Captain Brooke's Pamphlet, quoted by Helms, Pioneering, p.218.) The question of the annuity, as Helms pointed out, was a matter for the Sarawak exchequer only, and would therefore not concern the Memorial Committee in any way, or have to be considered by them. But this fact seems to have been overlooked by some people, and this led to further confusion in argument over the difference in terms as stated in the letters of December 1858 and March 1859.

It was at some time during this month of March that a meeting was held at John Templer's chambers at which the Rajah formally announced his impending abdication and presented his nephew as the Rajah of Sarawak to the five men present, members of the working committee for the Fund. The five were Templer himself, Thomas Hughes, Q.C., who was joint secretary with him, Lord R. Cecil, Mr. A.A. Knox of the Foreign office, who was an intimate friend of Sir James, and Mr. Trelawney. This was one of the happenings on which Captain Brooke later based his claim to the Raj, and one which even his bitterest enemies found it difficult to dismiss entirely. In his pamphlet is the following paragraph:

"Sir James Brooke's words on this occasion were to the following effect:- 'Gentlemen, - there is the Rajah of Sarawak; as far as lies in my power in this country I make over Sarawak to him; and hereafter, should my health enable, I will return to invest him personally in the Court of Sarawak.'"

The views of three of the five men present, Templer, Hughes and Knox, are on record, and will be given presently.

Captain Brooke was finding it difficult at this time to keep up payments to the Rajah. With the depleted government exchequer and the various complications, he himself was pressed for money, although, contrary to certain statements which became current

later, the Rajah's allowance always was paid. (See Chap.20, p.285.)

Emily Hahn in James Brooke of Sarawak quotes two very illuminating letters from Captain Brooke, written at about this time; the first to his father, the Rev. F.C. Johnson, on March 16, and the second, next day, to his mother. They show plainly the extent to which Sir James' family and friends were being worried by the constant vacillations which had become inseparable from his conduct of affairs. Obviously Brooke had been compelled to ask his father for financial help for himself, for he wrote:

"It is hard to have to come down on you, and hurts my vanity to think that I have been 20 years on the world without being able to provide myself with bread... All will go well now if the Rajah can be kept quiet, - but if he interferes at all his friends will stop, and there will be an end of it for ever. They are thoroughly sick of it and so am I... Do get the Rajah to Lackington and soothe him, for everything depends on his not interfering with our plans."

He goes on to state that he is taking the memorial to Miss Coutts on the following day, "and the money will be raised on the express condition that he retires and gives the Govt. of Sarawak to me..." (Grant Papers. Quoted by Emily Hahn, James Brooke of Sarawak, p.237.)

Next day, however, he wrote to Mrs. Johnson:

"I am like a wretched Dwarf in the hands of some giant Fate who with one hand one day puts me on my legs, the next knocks me down again with the other. This is my down day...."

A letter had been received from the Rajah, showing:

"... that he intends to do as much mischief as possible before he gives up to me. But as this money is to be collected on the express condition that he yields the Government up entire to me, in recognising it I hope he will not have the power to do this." (Grant Papers. Quoted by Emily Hahn, James Brooke of Sarawak, p.237.)

Miss Coutts had refused to see Brooke on the previous day, though she stuck to the Memorial, at anyrate for the time being. "I think it will be all right there but the suspense is trying and

tomorrow she goes into Devonshire..." It was desirable, he continued, that the money should be raised by private subscription, but if sufficient could not be realised in that way "we must pocket our pride and go to the public... I wish the Rajah would come to Lackington. I am so afraid of his interfering and spoiling our plans. This is the last effort, and if it fails I am convinced nothing more can be done, for the Rajah's friends are utterly tired out." (Grant Papers, quoted by Emily Hahn, James Brooke of Sarawak, p.237.)

That same day he wrote to Miss Coutts to explain his call upon her:

"That very morning I had received from Sir J. Brooke a letter urging me to do my best to raise a sum of money for him, and that if I succeeded it was his intention to retire, leaving the Administration of Sarawak to me. Having heard that no steps could be taken till your decision was known, and feeling that no time was to be lost, I at once made up my mind to take the very unpleasant step of waiting upon you with such a Mission. I have this morning heard from Mr. Templer of your objection to a Subscription. I assure you his family also bitterly feel the humiliation of such a course, but can suggest no other means of raising the necessary fund. The scheme of making over Sarawak and its people to England for a sum of money, is beyond Sir James Brooke's power, is in opposition to my rights as the Heir, and moreover has been already most strongly protested against by the people of Sarawak, who are attached to their present Gvt. and will not willingly submit to a change.

"I hope you will do me the justice to suppose that I have no personal hope of advantage from raising this money...." (Rajah Brooke & Baroness Burdett Coutts, p.58.)

It is not known what Miss Coutts replied to this letter, but it is obvious that by this time she was against the idea of the Rajah abdicating in legal form, for had he done so she would no longer have been able to exercise control over Sarawak affairs. It was after this that Sir James visited her at Torquay and the matter

of the loan to repay the Borneo Company was arranged. "I wish to say how much my mind has been relieved by your kindness," he wrote. "What you said this morning will save Sarawak."

From that time onwards Miss Coutts' control of the situation was in fact absolute. Four years later, on 8 July, 1863, after the final break with his elder nephew, Sir James wrote:

"I tried about May or June 1860 to release myself and impose the responsibility of Government upon Mr. Brooke, but in vain, as the Missus [his name for Miss Coutts] was always opposed to it, and thus saved Sarawak from falling into the hands of a man who has now proved himself to be half rogue, half fool." (Rajah Brooke & Baroness Burdett Coutts, p.193.)

The appeal appeared in The Times on 11 May, 1859, over the names of a committee of eight, the Right Hon. the Earl of Ripon being Chairman.

After setting out Sir James' achievements in the Far East with regard to the suppression of piracy, the laying down of fresh lines of defence for England's Eastern Empire, and the encouragement and protection of Christian missionaries, it goes on as follows:

"In the commencement of the year 1857 the prosperity of his settlement in Sarawak received a rude shake from the Chinese Insurrection. The prompt suppression of this insurrection was felt beyond the place itself and tended mainly to prevent similar outbreaks in Singapore and other British settlements in the Straits. He came to this country to obtain further recognition and aid from the British Government, but he had not succeeded in the attempt when the hand of God was laid heavily upon him; he was stricken with paralysis. He has now retired from public life and has resigned the active administration of affairs at Sarawak to his nephew Mr. Brooke, by whom the settlement will be maintained unchanged in its political and commercial aspects."

On May 26th The Times wrote concerning this appeal, (and a better description of how James Brooke was viewed by his contemporaries could scarcely be found:)

"There has appeared in our columns lately in the form of an advertisement, an appeal to the British public in behalf of Sir

JAMES BROOKE, Rajah of Sarawak. It is an appeal which concerns a man who has made his name famous among his contemporaries, and who will live in the pages of his country's history as long as English history is read. His career has been marked by such romantic incidents that one can scarcely hope the time has yet arrived when he will be rightly judged. He has been sneered at as a dreamer, reviled as a huckstering merchant, persecuted by an infinitely small minority of his fellow-subjects, and honoured by the QUEEN, the Parliament, and the nation. How can one man have excited such opposite feelings? How can the career of a single Englishman have supplied materials for such discordant comments? The true explanation we take to be that Rajah BROOKE is a man not of our age. By character, if not by date, he belongs to the brotherhood which discovered the two Americas, which first attempted the passage by the Cape, and which has endeavoured to penetrate the secrets of either pole.

"Such men have built up the fabric of British power. It is because there have always been found Englishmen ready for this rough elemental work that the British flag never wholly droops in shadow."

In the end the appeal realised a little under £9000 and the money was presented to the Rajah some time in the following year. Meanwhile in July (1859) he purchased a small property at Burrator, on Dartmoor, Miss Coutts giving him a mortgage for £2500 to enable him to do so.*

* Charles Brooke transferred the property to Miss Coutts after the Rajah's death, in exchange for the amount she had advanced. Owen Rutter in his commentary adds that she was thus well repaid, for although she had received no interest on the mortgage the Rajah had spent a considerable amount on improving the house, and had given £2800 for it in the first place. (Rajah Brooke & Baroness Burdett Coutts, p.310.)

We must now go back to the important meeting at Templer's chambers in March 1859. Four years later, when it became necessary for Captain Brooke to state his case, he quoted in his pamphlet the following letter from Mr. Hughes, Q.C., already mentioned as having been one of the men present. On 28 April, 1863, Mr. Hughes wrote as follows:

"I am much grieved at the news you send me, though I was not altogether unprepared for something of the kind. It is a very sad subject to me, and it is painful to me to answer your questions, because I cannot do so without casting blame on one whom I have for many years honoured and looked up to as one of the greatest of living Englishmen. However, you, on behalf of Captain Brooke, have clearly a right to ask me for plain answers to a plain question, as I filled the office of joint secretary, with Templer, to the Brooke testimonial.

"First then it was my undoubted belief at the time when the fund was raised, that Sir James Brooke had determined to resign the Rajahship of Sarawak into the hands of his nephew, Captain Brooke. This belief remained unshaken; it is founded upon what I heard, before the testimonial was started, from Sir James Brooke and his intimate friends, and upon the statement of his views which he made to the committee at the first meeting. I would gladly speak with diffidence on the point if I dared; but my memory of what took place, and of my own motives for taking an active part in so disagreeable a duty as raising money for a great man, is too clear to allow me to do so.

"Secondly, I cannot say whether the other subscribers looked upon their subscriptions as given upon this express understanding. Very few of them were at the meeting at which Sir James declared his intention of resigning, and we had no means of judging what the motives of the general body were, with whom we were not brought into personal contact. I only speak positively for myself and I should wish not to go any further in my testimony. Of course you may make any use you please of this letter." (Captain Brooke's Pamphlet; quoted by Helms, Pioneering, pp.227-228.)

To this letter may be added one from Mr. A.A. Knox to Miss Coutts, written at about the same time, 14 May, 1863. In answer, evidently, to a question she had put to him, he wrote:

"It is perfectly true that at the first considerable Testimonial Meeting Sir James did introduce his nephew to the Meeting as Rajah of Sarawak and promised to hand him over the Government." (Rajah Brooke & Baroness Burdett Coutts, p.192.)

Helms arrived in England just about the time that this important meeting took place. By the first week in April the Rajah had been persuaded to go to White Lackington, and he wrote Helms

the following letter from there on April 8th.:

"My dear Helms, -

"I congratulate you on your arrival and I trust your affairs may be so well arranged with the Borneo Company as to meet your wishes and their interests. From my state of health I know little or nothing of what is going on, as it is particularly recommended that I should avoid any excitement. It would have pleased me much to have seen you, but living as I do out of the world and far from any railway station, it is quite impossible and not worth while for an hour's visit to make so long a journey. My active career is over and I have made arrangements to resign the government into Brooke's hands at an early date. I hope we may meet again in Sarawak as I never give up the prospect of revisiting the country and people before my death. We have had many a pleasant day there and you may again enjoy it, and be usefully and agreeably employed. Brooke will be in town on Tuesday next, and you may meet him before you depart for your native land. I wish you every joy in meeting your family and friends in Denmark after so long an absence, and with every kind wish believe me, my dear Helms, very sincerely yours,

J. Brooke."

"I therefore looked upon Captain Brooke as the future Rajah," wrote Helms, "and as I had known him for many years as an amiable and fair-dealing man, who had governed the country well and firmly, I rejoiced at the prospect."

To this description of Brooke Brooke may be added the one written by Harriette McDougall not long after his first arrival in Sarawak in 1848. Wondering what his wife would be like should he decide to marry she wrote:

"She must... be cheerful, for he is grave; chatty, for he is reserved; musical if possible... I can promise her a very superior husband, handsome and with a most winning smile, thoughtful and affectionate, with excellent abilities and judgement, a good temper and high principles; moreover a soft heart easily influenced by love, but rather fastidious and a little inclined to satire. He is an especial favourite of mine, but I have only lately learnt to know him well, he is so fond of wrapping himself in a mist."
(McDougall Memoirs, p.99.)

Helms possessed the photograph of him reproduced in this book. It is undated, but appears to have been taken when he was on his

way to carry out some official duty; note the umbrella.

Chapter Twelve

Ann

There is no record remaining of Helms' journey back to Denmark to which the Rajah referred in his letter. But we may be sure that the returned traveller was welcomed with joy and enthusiasm, that his mother and the rest of the family listened breathlessly to his tales of adventure, that the old house was the scene of many convivial parties, and that Dr. Gyntelberg, though twelve years older, composed another poem. Christense had married the pastor of a country village four years earlier; he was a widower with one little girl, and if she and her husband were unable to come to Varde then Helms certainly visited them at Svanninge. Christense herself never had any children, but her beloved stepdaughter, Camilla, became to her as her own.

Then, back again in England, Helms met the girl he married. He used to say that as he came into the room and before his hand left the door, he saw her, and said to himself: "That is my wife!"

Ann Amelia Bruce was twenty when he met her, small, with golden-brown hair and intensely blue eyes. She was one of a family of four daughters and two sons; her father, Thomas Bruce, was a Scot, her mother, Louisa, came from Devon. They lived in Suffolk and were Nonconformists, and their eldest daughter was already in China, the wife of a missionary.

Ann herself had been given an excellent education, more thorough than most girls received at that time, finishing with two years in Germany, at a school in the old town of Hildesheim. This school, kept by a father and daughter, Herr August and Fraülein

Elisabeth Fick, enjoyed a considerable reputation, and was in existence for many years, certainly up to 1914, when it was known as the Elisabethschule after its foundress. There Ann studied German literature and learnt to speak the language fluently, and with other senior pupils she helped to work a cross-stitch carpet for the local pastor. Her album survives from those days, full of sentimental little verses in the taste of the time, embellished with drawings of tombstones and weeping-willows. On one page are pasted some little yellow feathers with "My dear Dickie" written beneath them, and the date of her canary's death. Ann had a great love of all living creatures and when she was an old lady was once heard to say how much she would like to live in a keeper's cottage at the Zoo and help with the animals. That love of animals, and a robust commonsense which served her well during the somewhat unusual and adventurous life she led after her marriage, were the two characteristics best remembered by her granddaughter.

Helms signed an agreement with the Borneo Company whereby one third of the profits (if any) of the Sarawak Branch should be his, and was entrusted with the tough job of trying to turn failure into success. It was arranged that he and Ann should be married at the end of the year. Whether Mr. and Mrs. Bruce objected to a second daughter going so far from home I do not know. Probably they took it quite calmly; Emma had gone to China, why should not Ann go to Borneo? And just before Christmas Ludvig Verner and Ann Amelia were married very quietly in London. A few weeks before the wedding Helms went with Captain Brooke to visit the Rajah; who was then taking the cure at Bath. "He congratulated me on my engagement," he wrote. "Captain Brooke also had just become engaged to Miss Welstead who became his second wife."

Immediately after the ceremony Helms and his bride travelled

to Denmark, that he might introduce her to his family. Then, back in England again, they embarked at Southampton on 20 February, 1860, for their future home, Captain Brooke being a fellow-passenger. Ann was to make the journey to Borneo and back more than once during subsequent years, but it was only when she left Sarawak for the last time that she was able to travel by the Suez Canal, for although its construction was already decided upon it was not formally opened to traffic until the end of 1869. But the overland journey enabled them to make the trip to the Pyramids and to do some other sight-seeing.

Of his return to Sarawak that year Helms wrote:

"I had been absent two years all but two months, and found that this period had been an unfortunate one alike for the Government and the Company."

The principal cause of trouble had been a deep-laid plot by two intriguing Malay chiefs, Sherif Musahore and the Datu Haji Guffur, who in the past had been punished by the Rajah for rebellion and then pardoned. These two seized their opportunity while Sir James and Captain Brooke were both absent, to conspire against the government with the intention of killing all Europeans. The murder of Fox and Steele was the first move, but the more extended conspiracy was discovered and Charles Johnson, who was in charge, dealt firmly with the emergency and drove the two men out of the country. Subsequently the question of responsibility for the murder was gone into carefully, and it was proved beyond doubt that Musahore was responsible:

"These events," wrote Helms, "following so soon upon the insurrection of the Chinese... caused great uneasiness and threw a gloom over the place which, of course, also reacted unfavourably upon all mercantile pursuits. In fact, when I accepted the offer of returning to Borneo many of the Europeans had left or were preparing to leave. The high hopes with which the Company had started in 1856 were now brought very low, the happenings had

indeed entirely disorganised the original scheme."

Bishop McDougall's correspondence at this time shows with what anxiety the situation was viewed by those in responsible positions. In January 1859 he wrote:

"Unless things improve and we are afforded the same protection that English subjects, merchants and missionaries on the coast of China and elsewhere are afforded by the regular visits of men-of-war and the usual consular authority, I shall, I fear, be obliged to state that this is no longer the place where an establishment like ours, with women and children, can be safely or permanently kept up." (McDougall Memoirs, p.175.)

And in July of the same year, writing to his brother-in-law, Mr. Bunyon, from Santubong:

"I hear that there has been a regular panic at Sarawak among the wives of the second-class Europeans, who all packed up and wanted to start for Singapore; but their fears have been allayed and only Mrs. Middleton, who suffered so much in the insurrection, persists in going. The Chinese are scudding away too, I hear."

(McDougall Memoirs, p.195.)

So that early in 1860 the Bishop considered it advisable to go home on leave in order to consult with Mission headquarters, and his homeward journey crossed the outward route of Captain Brooke and the Helms'. On the voyage Brooke wrote to the Bishop's brother-in-law on February 25th as follows:

"I was very sorry to leave without seeing you again; perhaps I shall have the luck to meet the Bishop in Egypt. It would be very satisfactory to me to have a talk with him on the state of affairs in Sarawak.... I was not allowed to have my way, or I believe that I might have gained all that is absolutely necessary, that is, the substantial support of English men-of-war. I was forced into demanding the formal recognition of our Government or nothing at all; this, I am convinced, the Government will never give."

(McDougall Memoirs, p.204.)

And this letter shows that although Captain Brooke at Sir James' request had taken up negotiations with the British Government, yet he was never allowed anything resembling a free hand, and in the last resort was always checked.

In fact, as Helms wrote:

"...This did not seem a very good time at which to bring out a young wife, and recommence my labours in Borneo,"

For, as nothing succeeds like success, so nothing fails like failure. The Sarawak Government was impoverished, and the Borneo Company had had its prospects blighted and confidence shaken, and had incurred losses both direct and indirect:

"But having in England been made fully acquainted with the events taking place in Sarawak during my absence, I was not affected by the low and desponding condition in which I found everything on my arrival. And I was fortified against it by my determination to do my utmost to infuse new life into the Company's operations according to plans understood and sanctioned at home."

And on the very threshold of Sarawak, on the sands of Santubong, they found a party assembled to welcome back Captain Brooke and this cheered them considerably. There were Mr. and Mrs. Crookshank, and there were also Mr. Alderson and Mr. Watson:*

"None of those who were actors in the events of those days will forget the humourous wit and kindly disposition of those two young men, now dead, who in those gloomy days contributed so much to enliven our small party."

* Mr. W.C. Watson joined the Sarawak Government Service in the autumn of 1857 and resigned in 1869. Mr. Alderson joined at the same time but was obliged to leave through ill health, and died some years later in New Zealand.

So, in spite of the somewhat uncertain prospects, Helms and his young wife, their spirits high, took possession of the house overlooking the river, which he then called Aneberg as a compliment to her.*

* Aneberg remained the home of the Sarawak Managers of the Borneo Company until about 1900, when a new house was built on adjacent grounds. Aneberg itself then had a chequered career until, after the second World War it was finally pulled down. A modern house with the same name now stands on the site. (Information from Mr. T.C. Martine.) Rane Margaret, describing her first journey up the Sarawak River early in 1870, when everything was very new and strange to her, wrote of Aneberg as a "bungalow, rather a homely

looking house, with gables and green and white blinds, the sight of which comforted me." (My Life in Sarawak, p.8.)

And now we must return to London, to follow the intricate thread of political happenings.

The Rajah, shortly after buying Burrator in July 1859 had written to his sister, Mrs. Johnson: "Brooke and I are settling quite comfortably the future course of Sarawak. We are now quite of a mind on essential points." And to Templer on October 10th of the same year: "Brooke paid me a few days visit and at my suggestion he wrote to Lord Palmerston he had again become Premier in June, to urge a decision..." (Jacob, 2, p.315.) But, as Captain Brooke's letter to Mr. Bunyon on February 25, 1860, showed, Sir James stood out for full recognition or nothing. He wrote an intemperate letter to the Prime Minister, to the effect that Sarawak, being independent, would go her own way. He received a sharp reminder that he was a British subject.

He then requested Captain Brooke to open tentative negotiations with Holland. But Holland was not interested. And then, early in 1860, he asked protection from the Emperor Louis Napoleon of France. "The consequence was an outcry from many," wrote Miss Jacob, (Jacob, 2, p.321,) the organisers of the Fund in particular, since they had expressly stated that to prevent this was one of its objects,* and it may well be that the episode had something to do with the fact that the final sum raised was much smaller than that aimed at, though rumours of family disunity

* The fact that this had been one of the original conditions was subsequently denied by Mr. Fairbairn who, in a letter dated 13 May, 1863, declared that "no stipulation or suggestion of any kind affecting Sir James Brooke's future conduct or perfect freedom of action was ever made." Helms quoted this letter in Pioneering, (p.231,) in order to state both sides of the case. But Charles Grant, in a letter to Helms on 18 February, 1882, wrote: "As regard Sir Thomas Fairbairn's letter, it is at entire variance with the

printed circular issued by his own committee, I think it was in Brooke's pamphlet..." This pamphlet, (quoted by Helms, Pioneering, p.226,) stated specifically that the fund was raised for a double purpose: "to enable Sir James Brooke to retire from Sarawak and to prevent him raising the necessary funds by negotiating with France. Sir James knew the conditions upon which the fund had been raised; they were prominently stated in the circular issued by the committee."

may have been a contributory cause. Sir James himself was annoyed by their attitude, and wrote to Miss Coutts on 30 April, (1860:)

"...these gentlemen had friendly intentions whatever may be their acts now. I do not think they could pretend I had stated anything in the shape of a pledge not to seek protection elsewhere, so contrary is it to proof and reason." (Rajah Brooke & Baroness Burdett Coutts, p.76.)

All through the different negotiations Sir James insisted, against the advice of his old friends, on a financial compensation clause being inserted. Captain Brooke steadfastly opposed this, maintaining that to receive a sum of money was to sell the country. In his pamphlet he wrote:

"Suffice it to say that Mr. Brooke (who has since most unaccountably been taunted by Sir James with having consented to negotiate with France and accept French money,) steadily maintained that to receive a sum of money was to sell Sarawak, which Sir James had already assigned to him as his heir."

For on January 24th, (1860,) Sir James had written to him:

"...conveying a threat that if he would not obey his authority in the matter of the negotiations, he would try their relative strengths by going out to Sarawak. Captain Brooke yielded under protest, urging only the claims of himself and his officers if the Rajah persisted. The Rajah was in a precarious state of health and the people of Sarawak in an excitable state following the threatened Malay Insurrection, hence moderation was necessary."

(Charles Grant's Synopsis, Grant Papers.)

And on January 28th the Rajah followed this up with a further letter written from Torquay, as follows:

"My dear Brooke,

"On the 24th I wrote upon urgent business. I told you

discussion was past and put a simple question for you to answer, yes or no. Do not think I asked your consent to enter upon this negociation. I required to know myself whether I could entrust the administration of Sarawak to your charge...." (Captain Brooke's Pamphlet.)

England however, though not willing to give formal recognition to Sarawak, did not approve of negotiations with France either, and they speedily came to nothing. In a letter to Fairbairn of 6 April, 1860, the Rajah wrote:

"... We, i.e. my nephew and myself, have applied to England and Holland for aid, last to France - but that is over too, for political affairs would not warrant me in negotiating further. In a short time I must decide upon going out, or strengthen Brooke's government so as to let him carry it forward with a prospect of success." (Jacob, 2, p.321.)

But just at this moment Miss Coutts made Sir James the offer of an armed steamer which would help to protect the coast, and run regularly between Sarawak and Singapore. Joyfully he accepted the gift, and then wrote to his nephew on April 7th a letter which blamed him for the breakdown of the negotiations. It ran as follows:

"I seized the opportunity (such as it was) to break off the negotiation with France. You have thus defeated my efforts to save Sarawak by your representations, when you ought to have supported me with vigor after agreeing to the measure and after your proposal to sell our rights and abandon the country."

He goes on to say that if the Testimonial does not produce the required amount he will be compelled to return to Sarawak. On the other hand, if it does, he will break off all connection with the country, giving Brooke any support he may ask for. Then comes an extremely important passage:

"Our different principles of action must not clash longer. By the next mail you shall hear further, and shall have the legal documents as soon as Mr. Booty [his solicitor] can prepare them. In either case I can send a steamer shortly which will enable us to hold Sarawak for some years at least and warrant her ruler in continuing the government in its present position." (Rajah Brooke &

Baroness Burdett Coutts, p.73.)

Owen Rutter, in his commentary on the Correspondence, professed to see in Brooke Brooke's attitude the reason for the abandonment of the French negotiations, but two days later, on 9 April, we find Sir James writing to the Bishop of Oxford, who was one of those who interested himself in Sarawak:

"The altered relations between England and France prevented my pursuing the negociation in the latter quarter, - and I have so intimated to the chiefs and people by the outgoing mail... I trust that in a few days I shall be enabled formally to transfer my authority and responsibility to my nephew and successor, and an application on his part might then be made... to Lord Palmerston, though in my opinion it will be of little use." (Rajah Brooke & Baroness Burdett Coutts, p.75.)

Even St. John, though his interpretation of events is usually too strongly biased to be relied on, wrote:

"Holland had refused to enter into negotiations; England was indifferent; so the Rajah turned to France. Here too there was failure; no nation would touch what was refused by England, as it was known that England would be displeased by such interference."

(Spenser St. John, Life of Sir James Brooke, p.334.)

There it was not only unjust but also absurd to blame Captain Brooke for the failure of negotiations into which he had only entered at Sir James' request and which, apart from anything else, were not officially started until just before he left England and ended even before he reached Sarawak on April 17th, having taken, as Helms his fellow-passenger recorded with precision, "one month and 27 days" on the journey. Furthermore, the Borneo Company had decided to persevere and had just reappointed Helms, which it would not have done if it had thought there was any likelihood of Sarawak falling under French influence.

The fact is that it is only too evident that Sir James had lost his grip, and his entire correspondence at this time shows it, since he contradicted himself with almost every letter he wrote.

The gift of an armed steamer obviously made him feel that all might yet come right in Sarawak, but only if he himself were the ruler, and there can be no doubt that Miss Coutts encouraged him in this opinion. He inspected and purchased the ship in Glasgow in June and named her Rainbow, and she sailed for Sarawak on August 25th. We hear no more of legal documents to be prepared by Mr. Booty; instead we have a letter to Captain Brooke on August 8th, which says, amongst other things:

"... If we differ I must govern, and if I cannot guide your measures I must return to carry out my own policy... I have always told you you could not whilst I live be free of my control, whether exercised as Rajah or Rajah Tuah,* nor can you ever 'choose your own policy' as you now write... in due time I propose to transfer the government but not to confer upon you any power to act independently of me..." (Quoted by Emily Hahn, James Brooke of Sarawak, p.246.)

* Old Rajah. The Malay term for a ruler who has handed over his power to his successor.

So the confusion became worse than before, and Sir James' old friends watched these happenings with considerable anxiety. And out of his vacillations during this summer of 1860 came serious consequences, for John Templer thought he was really going out of his mind, and said so. Various people became involved in the unpleasantness, including Bishop McDougall, but the real state of affairs was clearly put in a letter which Templer, after months of exasperation, wrote to Sir James on August 10th:

"It is of course difficult to meet vague charges, but if it can be any satisfaction to you to know what I have thought and have said to mutual friends when mentioning the many subjects on which of late I have differed from you, it was, that in my opinion the noble quality of sound judgment for which you were so remarkable had become impaired, and that I attributed it to the disease with which you had been stricken - that it had explained to me much that I had found it difficult to reconcile before with your former self, and I instanced the course you had taken with regard to George, by which you placed your friends and relatives in a false position.

Then the Testimonial - the French question - the refusal to relinquish the Raj in Brooke's favour - and still more lately your line with McDougall and myself in this very case, strengthened the impression. About the Testimonial, you knew my reluctance - on the French matter I wrote you as strongly as a man could write - regarding George, up to your leaving Harrow you were always telling me you were pushing enquiries that would end in proof - it never came, and I regarded the whole thing as a delusion. As to the Raj, you know how constantly I have urged you to give up all business. But I have ever felt that discussion upon all these subjects would be useless... and it has been one of the causes of great annoyance to me that with a great pressure upon my time otherwise, I find myself continually involved in correspondence upon different matters regarding your concerns on which I disapproved your course, and could feel interest only so far as they affected you."

(Quoted by Emily Hahn, James Brooke of Sarawak, p.244.)

And after this the friendship with Templer was broken, the first of the estrangements from old friends which were to follow.*

* This seems a fitting place at which to refer once more to Sir Thomas Fairbairn's letter of 13 May, 1863, in which he wrote of "the shameful clique who subsequently wanted to make out that the Rajah was mad." With regard to this passage Charles Grant's comment was: "... in alluding to the 'shameful clique' he perhaps did not know that there were others besides them who honestly believed the dear old Rajah in his illness and anxieties, to be at that time unhinged both in body and mind." (Letter to Helms dated 18 February, 1882.)

Chapter Thirteen

Governor Edwardes

The most interesting source of information left by Helms is a letter-press book containing copies of letters, both business and personal, written during three periods; first from July 1860 to December 1863, secondly for six months during the year 1867, and thirdly for eight months from 1871 to 1872. The second and third divisions are almost entirely to his wife when she was in England, and some in Danish to his mother. The first contains letters to his Directors in London and to Company colleagues in Singapore, with whom he worked in close conjunction, since most of the shipping he needed passed through that port, and all necessary supplies for Company undertakings had to be obtained wither from, or through it. These letters give a clear picture of Sarawak happenings; of business activities and struggles with regard to the trade which he was building up in antimony, sago, timber, rattans, rubber and other commodities; of machinery for saw-mills and for sago-roasting; of rumoured discoveries of this, that, or the other metal or produce which had to be looked into, necessitating long and often fruitless journeys into the jungle; the whole giving a vivid impression of the tireless energy and the unquenchable optimism which were characteristic of him. They also give glimpses of day to day life in Kuching in those years. Light is thrown on the problems of housekeeping by orders for household supplies to a Singapore firm, since goods could only be ordered and received by steamers sailing at irregular intervals, and large stores of essentials had to be kept on hand. Social activities are also mentioned, especially in the last two groups. Most important of all, there are

letters dealing with the great perplexities with which Helms, as manager of the Sarawak branch of the Borneo Company, was faced as a result of the quarrel between the Rajah and his elder nephew.

An early letter in the book is one to his father-in-law which describes both business and domestic aspects of life in Kuching in the first year of his marriage:

"Sarawak, 6th July, 1860.

"My dear Mr. Bruce,

"I believe Ann has kept you pretty well informed of our doings, our voyage, arrival here, and her first impressions of Borneo, which you would see were favourable, and I am happy to say she continues to like her Sarawak home, and what is not less important, to enjoy good health. - She thoroughly enters into my views and schemes for the development of the resources and trade of the country, and finds no want of employment. - We were fortunate in getting a particularly fine Piano which gives us many a pleasant hour. She has no less than three Photographic Machines, one of which is very large and powerful; you may expect her to take some nice views for you when the chemicals have been received and she has had some practice. - We have been and are still very busy, clearing and planting our grounds, which will be very pretty bye and bye. Ann is quite a Housekeeper and knows how to keep our native servants up to the mark as our Butler finds to his cost, inasmuch as his monthly Bill is about one half of what it used to be...

"I have not been idle since my return here, and have in the first place had plenty to do to repair the buildings, wharves, etc., of the Establishment, which my predecessor* had allowed to go to ruin.

* Mr. Duguid, who had been in charge during Helms' absence in Europe.

"Ann and I have just returned from the up-country, where she opened a Tramroad to our Antimony Mines (at Busau) which had just been completed. The antimony trade is very flourishing. I am now loading the third ship for England since my arrival here, this is a London ship, the General Wyndham, and carries a thousand tons. - The Captain has his wife, two Children and Maid on board, we have invited them to stay with us while the ship is loading, which may be mutually agreeable. But to return to the mineing, our veins look rich, and the demand at home seems to increase, and high prices are mentioned. We have five or six cargoes afloat, and all is sold to

arrive. - We have found some other ore in connection with the Antimony which may turn out to be still more valuable. I believe having told you that we had found in another part of the Country indications of Nickel and Copper; I have received fresh evidence of this which I think shows enough to demand a closer examination, and I have just sent a mineing party away to bore, blast and seek....

"Our Machinery for sago-roasting is expected here in two months. I am anxiously looking out for it to test its success, as the entire responsibility of it rests on me. I have no fears, however, but in all new undertakings of this kind there are generally some unforeseen difficulties, and I may have mine though I don't see them yet.

"Ann was gladdened a few days ago with letters from Mr. and Mrs. Wilson, [her sister Emma, in Hangkow.] She wanted one badly, dear Girl, as she had not had any yet. - I cannot understand that she has received none from Home, I expect one must have been lost off the Steamer Malabar which went down in Galle Harbour, and in which the unfortunate Box was lost...."

Helms later added a footnote to the above letter: "This box contained my Wife's Truso, a most unlucky one." It is not clear why Ann's trousseau did not travel with her, possibly it had been sent by the long sea route round the Cape. Whatever the reason, she arrived in Kuching minus most of her pretty frocks, and what was worse, all clothing replacements which had been intended to last her for some time. The loss of extra footwear seems to have been particularly serious.

One or two of the household orders may be of interest. When it is considered that Sarawak is practically on the Equator and that there was no refrigeration of any kind at that time, it is clear that the storage of food must have presented some problems. My mother remembered the storeroom at Aneberg as being under the house but partially above ground and well ventilated. It became imprinted on her childish mind through the death of a much-loved kitten, crushed by a cask. She wept for it bitterly and prayed earnestly that she might meet it in heaven.

The preserving of foodstuffs had not yet advanced very far,

but occasional tinned items are asked for, most often soup or essence of beef. A typical order in July 1860 requests Messrs. John Little & Co., Singapore, to send "by an early opportunity: 3 doz. Claret, 1 Case Ale, 3 tins Salmon, 1 keg Tongue, 2 Hams, 1 Cask Bisquits," and after various small things finishes with "a supply of full-size blue Envelopes."

In the Sarawak world outside Aneberg stirring events were afoot that July. Almost immediately after Captain Brooke's return in April trouble started up again at Muka. When Charles Johnson drove Sherif Musahore out of the country he fled to Brunei, but calling at Muka on his way he induced his well-meaning but easily influenced brother-in-law, Pangeran Dipa, to adopt a hostile attitude towards Sarawak which led to the expulsion of Sarawak traders from Muka territory, once again affecting the developing sago trade. Captain Brooke found himself obliged to mount an expedition in order, if possible, to induce the Pangeran to raise his interdict. He was met with hostility, and had to throw up stockades.

A short series of letters gives the progress of the campaign as seen from Kuching.

To: John Harvey, (by that time in London.)

"Sarawak, 9th July, 1860.

"... Hay has just returned from Muka for reinforcements. - The Expedition had got successfully into the River Muka and had taken two or three fortified places but had found the main place strongly fortified and there met with determined resistance. None of our men were wounded... The other party has lost several men, among whom Pangeran Dipah's Brother. Great numbers of the Muka people have joined the Sarawak Expedition which is fortifying itself."

To: Captain Brooke.

"10th July.

"My dear Brooke, - We were disappointed to see Hay return alone, and sorry to think you all exposed to such risks as you have run,

but we trust to see you back ere long as conquerors. - You will learn from May that the mail Steamer Malabar went down in Galle Harbour with the greater part of the 26th of April Mail, - we were so fortunate as to get ours but I understand that you have not got your letters, and so I send you such Abstracts from ours as I think may prove interesting...

"Mrs. Helms sends you a few Calcutta Humps* and joins me in kind regards..."

* The humps of Indian cattle, salted and packed in casks.

To: John Harvey.

"Sarawak, 25th July, 1860.

"... I had this morning a note from Captain Brooke from Muka, he says: 'This Muka war is a more troublesome business than I expected, and the forts strong to assault with such a rabble. However, when our reinforcements arrive I shall be able to lead them such a life as will soon tire them out. This is a fair country and it is a thousand pities it should be undeveloped and at the mercy of a lot of rascally Borneans. When you can get away you should come and see the country and form your own opinion of its capabilities. We are all well and the climate appears delightful, and I have better health here than at Sarawak.'

"Large reinforcements of Malays have gone, Crookshank with them..."

To: Paul Tidman, (who had been moved to Singapore.)

"28th July.

"... The Expedition is yet at Muka, it seems to be a slow business. I hope the Dido will bring Gunpowder, it is much wanted."

The next letter begins by describing a difficulty with which Helms had to deal after his return from Europe. The neglect of the Sarawak branch of the Company by the man who had been in charge during his absence had apparently given rise to a feeling in the Singapore office that Kuching was not worth bothering about. On 30th July he wrote to Samuel Gilfillan (who had taken John Harvey's place:)

"... I shall be happy to supply our Singapore friends with accounts of anything that happens here, if that can cause them to take an interest in the welfare of this place, - for not merely on buying and selling are the permanent interests of the Company here

dependent; if we will enjoy the good things of the Country we must not shrink from the trouble which our position here involves. I know well that you personally do not grudge the drudgery which our Agency and the interest of the Government and its people involves, but I am told that such is not the general feeling in our Office, and that some of your staff look upon us as a nuisance. - Now, I can well imagine that we may be such, but we need not be so with proper arrangement. - You have now got a person in your Office who is peculiarly well qualified to look after our wants, [Tidman] so set him aside for it.

"The Rajah has all but bought a Steamer of 200 tons burthen to run between this and Singapore....

"The Muka affair was not so easily settled as Brooke expected, the real population of the country (the Melanos) have joined our people, but they are no use for fighting, and Sheriff Musahore's followers, with a lot of Bruni men, have shut themselves up in a fort and show considerable pluck, several Natives have been killed on both sides. The Dido is going across with the Gunpowder, and as considerable reinforcements both of men and cannon have been sent on, I trust the affair will soon be settled, this gang of Conspirators must be driven out for our security..."

The reinforcements and ammunition duly reached their destination, and Captain Brooke and his brother started a vigorous attack which was well on the way to success when something very curious happened.

The Governor of Labuan, Mr. G.W. Edwardes, had never approved of Sarawak and its indeterminate status. Possibly he was jealous of Brooke influence and would have liked to add more of the Sultan's territories to his own province, which enjoyed British protection. Edwardes was at this time occupying St. John's post of Consul General in Brunei during the latter's absence on leave, and he suppressed a letter of St. John's to the Sultan, alleging Musahore's guilt in the matter of the murders of Fox and Steele, for he had always argued that Musahore was innocent, even though his guilt had been amply proved.

What then was the amazement and fury of the Sarawak forces when Governor Edwardes appeared on the scene in the War-steamer

Victoria of the Indian Navy, and ordered hostilities to cease in the Queen's name. Not only that, but he towed the boat of one of the Brunei Pangerans behind the Victoria down to Muka, and announced that Musahore would shortly follow, which he did. Captain Brooke, unwilling to risk a collision, withdrew his forces, leaving Edwardes and Musahore masters of the situation. "It is strange," wrote Helms to Gilfillan, "how an otherwise able man [Edwardes] could commit this unwise act," and further letters to his Directors and colleagues show the consternation into which both Government and business circles were thrown by this extraordinary proceeding. One letter also supplies a possible motive which was apparently common talk at the time, though for obvious reasons it was impossible to prove.

To: The Directors of the Borneo Company Limited,

Sarawak, 23rd August, 1860.

"Gentlemen, -

"you are aware that dangerous and deep-laid conspiracies against the lives of Europeans in Borneo have long been at work in this country, that great massacres did take place in the dutch settlements in the South of Borneo, and that two english Gentlemen were murdered in the Sarawak Territory. - The instigators of the last murders remained for some time unknown, but other intrigues for the murder of the European Inhabitants of Sarawak having been discovered and proved to originate with Hadji Gafiar and Sheriff Musahore, it was found that the latter had caused the murder of Fox and Steele also.

"The detail of the Plots and the events which compelled Mr. Johnson to act against the Sheriff and drive him out of the Country I need not enter upon... - Suffice it to say that on my return to this country in April last I found that the dangers which had so long threatened the peace of the country were disseminated [dissipated]. The dutch Government had taken two of the Conspirators, and the Sheriff had been driven out of Sarawak by Mr. Johnson, to whose devotion, energy and courage, the Europeans here doubtless owe their lives. - My letters to the Company will show that confidence was rapidly being restored and that the country was again settling down to quiet and peaceful pursuits.

"It is therefore with the deepest regret that I now have to

notify to you the events set forth in the enclosed paper, which will show you that this Country is in a state of great agitation and alarm, that our Trade is destroyed, and our Security jeopardized in consequence of the measures taken by Mr. Consul General Edwardes.

"Enclosed I hand you a Petition signed by the principal Chinese and Indian firms, and beg that the Directors will present the same to the British Govt; and represent that a grievous injury has been done to the native Community.

"We trust and believe that it cannot be the intention of the Government that, while they refuse us protection, a british Official shall be allowed to hold up to the contempt of the Natives the Flag under which we have hitherto enjoyed our sole protection. The Petitioners earnestly entreat that the Directors, while protesting against the injury done to the Trade will also express to the Government their sense of the good services which Sarawak renders to civilisation and commerce.

"Your obedient and faithful Servant,
L. V. Helms."

To: John Harvey.

"23rd August, 1860.

"... The stupid interference of Governor Edwardes in our Muka quarrel has meanwhile put a stop to our Sago trade, which is most vexatious at a moment when we expected so much from our Machinery... I trust that you will do what can be done to get us redress, I cannot see how Edwardes can possibly be in the right. It is most lucky that St John and the Bishop are at home, will you try and see them both. - How Edwardes could withhold St John's letter to the Sultan which was written in Borneo while he still acted, [as Consul in Brunei] I cannot see. It is a life and death question for Sarawak that Sheriff Musahore is crushed and the Muka trade restored, effect this for us and we will go ahead."

To: William (later Sir William) Adamson.

"1st Sept. 1860.

"... This Branch is doing finely at present, and I might sit down quietly on our Antimony Quarries while the pot is filling, and then retire to a pleasant idleness, but you know I have always had a vague idea of a mission in connection with the 'development' of Borneo and which I have it now in my power to fulfil....

"I expected great things from our Sago Machinery, but the

stupid interference of Governor Edwardes on the Coast has for the present destroyed our Sago trade, and unless the british Government will set us right, or allow us to do so ourselves, I fear we have lost it entirely, - this obstinate old man has in his ignorance done incalculable mischief, and we look with great anxiety to the action of the british Government in this matter. - The Chamber of Commerce in Singapore might help us materially if they would take it up, and it is in the direct interest of Singapore Merchants that the trade which has sprung up on the Coast under the protection of the Sarawak Govt: and which has been increasing year by year, should not again be destroyed. However, out of evil often comes good and it may be so in this case, this question must, I think, force the british Govt: to take a decided step as to its relation with Sarawak, they cannot prevent us from protecting ourselves if they refuse to protect us; this point granted and we will have no difficulty in defending our rights against Bruni. I doubt not the Directors will do what they can, they understand well enough that the interest of the Company is closely connected with the prosperity of the Country and its Government, and there is the best feeling between us and the Govt: people..."

The next two letters deal with the arrival of the long-awaited machinery for the sago factory which was occupying Helms' mind so much at that time. On 30th September he wrote to John Harvey:

"... We have discharged some of the Machinery from the Rival. The Natives look with astonishment on our big Boiler and are much pleased, as they take it as a sign that the Company means to go ahead, it had a very depressing effect upon them that Mr. Duguid allowed everything to go to ruin, and they seem to have taken it as preparatory to the Company's abandonment of Sarawak."

And on the same day, to Gilfillan:

"... For the Sago Machinery there are somewhat gloomy prospects, however, it will take us four months to put it up, and I trust the british Government and the Singapore Chamber of Commerce will meanwhile do something for us. Sago failing I trust to Planks to keep our Mill going meanwhile... You will have learnt that the Sarawak Steamer is bought and that she is very fast..."

To: John Harvey.

"12th Sept. 1860.

"... Our Nacodahs complain bitterly of the british interference at Muka, besides having their trade destroyed many had Property there

which was destroyed by the Sheriff's party after Mr. Edwardes' interference, and it is one of their great complaints against him that he was partial, and that while he forced the Sarawak people to cease hostilities (when on the point of settlement,) he allowed the other party to continue. - Calmly examining the whole transaction it is difficult to get rid of the idea that Edwardes' sole purpose was to destroy Sarawak prestige and trade on the Coast for the benefit of Labuan, and the question then arises had he other interests which would be well-served by doing the Sultan a good turn? I can well imagine that backed up by the Company's money* he might now get anything he liked from the Sultan.

* The Eastern Archipelago Co., not to be confused with the Borneo Co. It had worked the coal mines on Labuan but had run into difficulties and a new company was being formed. The Eastern Archipelago Co. was at loggerheads with Sir James for many years, its allegations were some of those investigated by the Commission of Enquiry. See also Note 2 in Appendix.

"I am told that Edwardes had been promised by the old Company that if he kept things together at Labuan till a new Company was formed, certain mortgages which now cover his (English) property should be paid, and he himself have a Directorship. This should be enquired into, as the question is a grave one for Sarawak and indeed the whole Coast. - We have almost daily boats arriving with Fugitives from the Coast who leave their homes to seek security here.

"I expect to make a large trade in Oil, - Coconut, Vegetable Tallow and other kinds, and would like you to keep me advised on these articles..."

Today much of the prosperity of Sarawak depends upon oil-wells. But no mineral oil had as yet been found; the first mention of it comes more than two years later. This letter to Harvey was continued a few days afterwards, as follows:

"Your few lines of 1st Ult. came to hand yesterday, unprecedently quickly...[in about six weeks therefore].

"The prohibition against overdrawing of Clerks and other Employés shall be attended to, but it would be a hardship to most of the Employés to compel them to draw their salaries monthly, what are miners at Busau and Bedi to do with their dollars, there is no place here where they can deposit it, and it would be unsafe to keep it by them.

"The Merchants and others of Singapore are voting for us in the Labuan quarrel which leads us to hope that a similar verdict

will be given in England and that our Sago trade will be restored next year. Our Nacodahs understand that they must wait till then and behave well. - Numbers of people have come in from the Redjang and other Rivers, where many villages have been burnt by the hostile party. These newcomers will prove a useful population here and perhaps a short stoppage of the Sago trade may have the effect of opening out other resources of this Country. Tapioca planting is increasing rapidly. India Rubber, which we never could get at before, is now beginning to come forward."

From this time onwards Helms' business communications contain frequent references to rubber, or as he usually called it, gutta percha. Today it is one of the principal productions of Sarawak, and according to the Annual Report of the Chartered Bank for 1960 it accounted for more than half the country's exports for that year. There is an interesting mention of this growing trade in a letter from Tidman, dated 24 February, 1863, Singapore:

"Harvey (just like him) seems getting panicky about Gutta because there is not the supposed excitement after shares in the Atlantic Company. People may say what they like but the Atlantic Telegraph will be tried again without a doubt and I think you are perfectly safe, for the present at anyrate.... "*

* This refers to the use of rubber in the manufacture of telegraph cables. The Atlantic Telegraph Co. was registered in 1856 and an attempt was made to lay the first trans-Atlantic cable in the following year. It failed, as did attempts made in the two following years. It was not until 1865, two years after Tidman wrote his letter, that a further attempt led to success.

Returning to Governor Edwardes we find that towards the end of September he began to have misgivings as to the wisdom of the course he had pursued, for he sent the Victoria down to Kuching to offer her services in restoring order. Helms wrote to Tidman on September 25th:

"... The Mail is just about to close and merely time to say that the Victoria is in... If the Victoria has come to set matters to rights at Muka she shall be welcome, - in any case we are thankful to the commercial body in Singapore for their sympathy and assistance....

"It was, as you know, intended to remove Kanowit Fort, Abang

Ali and other Sarawak men did not feel themselves safe, and wanted to come away, but the Dyaks would not let them. Some of the Dyak chiefs came here and asked for two Europeans, (Fitz* and Watson,) and some Sarawak Malays to live in Kanowit, the fact is, they begin to find trade more profitable than war. In consequence of this Johnson and a number of Malays have gone thither; a number of trading Boats have also gone to buy Paddy, which is abundant there and scarce here.

* Fitz was Mr. J.B. Cruickshank. To distinguish him from Arthur Crookshank the Rajah gave him this nickname which was then generally adopted.

"Our Roads are to be extended towards Padminjan and then round towards the Rock, and I am thinking that some kind of Box on Wheels might at times be pleasant for the Ladies. Crookshank is trying to repair the old Chaise, but it is no good. Could you pick up anything of that kind in Singapore? I think a Dogcart would stand our roads best, but though the wheels should be high the boddy should be lower than usual to make it comfortable for Ladies...."

Whether the ladies got their dogcart is not stated, but the difficulties which they experienced in making ordinary purchases are well illustrated by the following appeal to Messrs. John Little concerning Ann's footwear, dated 29th September:

"... I am in receipt of your favour by the Albatross. The Boots which you sent for Mrs. Helms are not what she wants, one pair is returned by this oppty, being too large. - Please send her two pairs of Leather Boots of the same size as the pattern Boot which is in your possession. Also 2 doz. Sherry, 4 doz. Claret, some White Sugar, 1/2 doz. Marmalade, 2 doz. worsted Socks.

"P.S. The Boots are much wanted."

Returning to the aftermath of Governor Edwardes' doings there is also on 29 September a short note to Mr. W.H. Gomes, (a missionary working under Bishop McDougall.)

"My dear Gomes, - I have just time to answer your note, being about to start for Muka in H.M.S. Victoria with Crookshank and six of our Nacodahs, to try and recover our Sago trade ..."

And the next letter, which is dated November 1st and written to John Harvey, gives an account of the expedition:

"... You are doubtless aware that H.M.S. Victoria paid us a visit. The Sarawak Govt: determined to avail themselves of the

opportunity, and to send on some of the principal Malays whom I was invited to accompany, Crookshank also went. - The Muka people, whom we found fishing and otherwise occupied at the mouth of the River, took no alarm and appeared friendly. - The Captain, Crookshank, the six Malays and myself went up in the Steamer's boat; when we got halfway up to the Town we were met by several large boats full of men, guns and timber for erecting stockades, some men were loading their guns, and when we came to Pangeran Dipay's House (which is situated on a narrow Creek,) the place was full of armed savages...."

Here I will insert a fuller description of this incident which Helms wrote later, as follows:

"The House consisted of a building capable of holding several hundred men, and resting some twenty-five feet above the ground on piles, [i.e. a typical Dyak long-house.] It was crammed with armed men, and we realised that when the narrow ladder which we had to climb was once mounted we would be at Musahore's mercy, for he was there, and though Dipay's guest, the dominating factor. But the die was cast, - the Commander, who had been under Edwardes' influence, had not realised the danger of this mission and had brought us into the Tiger's Lair without any protection but a Boat's Crew. But there was no choice, we mounted the ladder and were placed at one end of the long building. Received by Dipah with friendly but very nervous handshakes we were so placed that facing Dipah the armed crowd was behind us. Musahore was not visible, but presently he entered, naked to the waist and with a great Kris in his sarong, and looking as black as night threw himself down beside the former. A few compliments and promises passed - and we descended the ladder with lighter hearts than we had mounted it, - Dipay had succeeded in exerting his authority and guarding our backs with his own men. So we returned safe to the Victoria, where my Wife, who as the Commander's guest was on board for the trip, had remained in ignorance of the risk we were running."

The letter to Harvey continued:

"Dipah expressed himself willing to receive Sarawak traders, but it was clear (and he said as much,) that he is under pressure from Sheriff Musahore and his followers... the Muka people kept aloof and if a Sarawak force was to appear in the River tomorrow they would probably join to a man, in spite of all they have suffered for their late adherence to the Sarawak cause. The Sultan of Bruni and his Pangerans have made the most of their opportunity and fined the people right and left. The boat of the Bruni Pangeran Orang Kayandi Gadong was lying at Muka when we were there, deeply

laden with brass Guns, and, we were told, nearly 2 piculs* of gold ornaments which had been squeezed out of the Muka and Oya people. That they submitted to it is solely owing to the countenance which the Bruni people have received in this matter from the British authorities, and particularly to the fact that the identical Boat which is carrying all the plunder, was towed down by a British war-steamer.

* The picul equalled 133+2/3 lbs. English.

"I have had two letters from Dipah since I was at Muka, and he protests good intentions, but we all know that while Sheriff Musahore is in the Country intriguing we will always be in hot water, and no Sarawak traders will risk going to Muka. - He must be driven out, and if the British Govt: would tell Edwardes to mind his own business Sarawak can easily do it.

"I wrote a letter from Muka to Governor Edwardes of which I enclose a copy:

"Written on board H.M.S. Victoria. [Undated.]

"... In consequence of the request of some of the Chinese and Malay traders of Sarawak I availed myself of Captain Wood's permission to visit Muka in the Victoria for the purpose of ascertaining whether the authorities there could be induced to re-open trade with Sarawak. I wish to acquaint your Excellency that the visit of H.M's Steamer has been so far successful as to induce Pangeran Dipah to promise to relieve Sarawak traders and allow them to trade. An interview took place between him and some of the principal Sarawak Malays, and the latter expressed confidence in the integrity of Dipah's intentions. But I have also to acquaint your Excellency that Pangeran Dipah, while expressing himself friendly towards Sarawak, stated that there are now people in Muka over whom he has no control, and it was clear from the demeanour of Sheriff Musahore and his followers that it was they whom he meant, as they showed signs of hostility, erecting stockades and loading guns in our presence. I have, therefore, to acquaint your Excellency that, in the opinion of myself and those who were with me, there can be no lasting peace with Muka till Sheriff Musahore is removed; and I pray your Excellency to effect this...."

To which Governor Edwardes replied from Labuan on October 28th:

"... I have to acknowledge your letter by the Victoria Steamer, and thank you for the information given of the state of affairs in the River Muka. It was most gratifying to me to find that Pangeran Dipah has so faithfully fulfilled his engagements; I trust that the trade of the river will have no further hindrance. As you have

visited it so recently in the Victoria I did not deem it necessary to return there immediately. I did not reply to your letter till I could make enquiries respecting the conduct of Sirib Musahore at Muka, but no information on the subject has yet reached Bruni. I desired Mr. Lowe [Chief Secretary] to Mention the subject to His Highness Jang de Pertuan [the Sultan] who has promised to make enquiries at Muka. His Highness is most anxious that the trade of the river should not be vexed from any cause, but you must be aware how impossible it is for me to press upon His Highness the individual interests of Sarawak at this moment, Mr. Brooke having declared all friendly relations to be in abeyance."

(Quoted by Helms, Pioneering, p.211.)

This last sentence appears to refer to an ill-advised action taken by Charles Johnson when he restored order in Muka in 1858. He had fined natives who were really subjects of Brunei, and was later instructed by the Rajah to refund the fines. But the incident had annoyed the Sultan.

The British Government, after considering all the representations made to it, disapproved of Governor Edwardes' action. St. John was recalled from leave and returned to his post, "authorised to convey to the Sarawak Government the disavowal and disapproval of Mr. Edwardes' proceedings, and the resolve of the British Government to decline all interference between Sarawak and Bruné." (Jacob, 2, p.324.)

Sir James decided to go out with St. John, and Miss Coutts provided him with money for his passage, and with munitions of war; guns, shells, powder, etc. They sailed from Southampton on November 20, (1860.) It seems as though Captain Brooke had wished if possible to prevent the Rajah making the journey, either at that time or earlier, for a letter from Mr. Knox, obviously referring to the situation created by the meeting at Templer's chambers, though its date is not given, is as follows:

"I do not see how you can object to the Rajah's return to Sarawak, for it appears that he must return to invest you formally

with authority. Continued residence there, and interference with your Government, would no doubt prove a violation of the honourable engagement between you." (Captain Brooke's Pamphlet, quoted by Helms, Pioneering, pp.226-227.)

At the end of Helms' letter to Mincing Lane on 1st November (1860,) is the following brief sentence: "I am sorry to inform you that Captain Brooke's eldest [elder] boy died a few days ago."*

* The date of the child's death is given in error as April 1862 on p.148 of Runciman, The White Rajahs.

The two little boys, Basil and Hope, had been in the charge of their aunt, Matilda Grant, since their mother's death in 1858. Mrs. McDougall, writing soon after that event, described Captain Brooke carrying his elder boy in his arms, and the child himself looking about and saying over and over again in Malay: "Mamma, Mamma, where's Mamma?" (McDougall Memoirs, p.181.) Brooke himself in a letter to his mother at the time wrote: "Basil is a most loving little fellow and oh, what joy to have something to set my affections on in this now desolate weary world." (Quoted by Emily Hahn, James Brooke of Sarawak, p.234.) The death of this child when barely three years old was the second of the heavy blows which Brooke Brooke was to suffer in his personal life.

Chapter Fourteen

The Ceremony at the Court House

Life settled down at Aneberg, and the Helms were able to enjoy their new home and the garden Ann was making. A letter to Henry Beauchamp in Sydney, written on 2 November, 1860, runs:

"... If the distance was more reasonable I should like nothing better than to pay you a visit... as it is I shall not despair of introducing my little Wife to you. We are, as you may suppose, now safely settled in our Borneo home, and I am glad to say that my Wife likes it very much, - though she is particularly lively she does not care for much society, - and even with the few Ladies that are here she only keeps up such intercourse as good will and politeness require, - the fact is we have a little world of our own which gives us ample occupation and pleasure. - I came out with a will and the means to open out the resources of this country, and I need not say that this gives me plenty to do, and while I carve out an independence for myself I am fulfilling a useful mission. - A ship is this moment reported in the River, she will be the sixth ship which I have despatched for England since arrival here. - A Sarawak armed Steamer is expected in another month, which will materially add to our security, - we have had our conspiracies and massacres but I think we are all right now..."

An order to Messrs. John Little dated the same day throws some light on clothing problems. It asks for:

"Fine white Cambric for 1/2 doz. Shirts, white Linen for 1 doz. Trowsers, Shanghai Silk or other suitable stuff for 6 Coats, one piece yellow fine Shanghai Silk for a Lady's use, one pith Hat and one Helmet...."

This was followed by the usual household orders for casks of flour, Calcutta humps, hams, etc., and finishes with:

"2 Bottols sweet Drops (not Peppermint,) 1 hanging Lamp with Chain and Pully complete, and 1 Shape for making Jelly."

Next comes a letter to his mother:

"2nd December, 1860.

"My dearly loved Mother..."

"On the 22nd of this month it will be a year since my marriage and I have reason to celebrate that day as the happiest of my life. My beloved Anna has fully justified my choice, she is my daily joy and finds herself perfectly happy here. We have had some dangerous days and I wanted at one time to send her to Singapore for a short time, but she showed herself as brave as she is good. The crisis is now past, and we live in quiet and security, and she passes the time pleasantly with her birds, flowers and music, when I am absent.

"Our Machines and an Engineer arrived safely here two months ago... I hope for good results from our undertakings, but much depends upon political conditions in Europe, if peace is maintained it will be good for our business, which is much needed, for this branch of the Company is loaded with the burden of a debt of 38,000 pounds sterling, lost on coal mines which I have told you about which failed to be remunerative. These mines are not in Sarawak proper but on the Coast, and I had no share in their inception, but the loss falls to this branch, and I will not enjoy my full share till it is paid. But my prospects are nevertheless very promising. We are waiting for a Steamer from England in a few days. This ship is a tribute from some of Rajah Brooke's admirers in England and will contribute much to our security..."

There follows a letter dated 5 January, 1861, to his father-in-law, who had asked advice on the advisability of investing in the new coal company in Labuan, the one referred to in the correspondence concerning Governor Edwardes. Helms goes into the question fully, and advises against it. His judgement was proved right; the company never met with much success. The letter goes on:

"We follow the political events at home closely and with great interest, and our dear little Ann is nearly as great a politician as myself. - We get all kinds of papers regularly once, (sometimes twice,) a month, and generally under forty days old. So with thanks for your kind offer to send us some we require them not.

"There has been some irregularity in the transmission of Sarawak letters of late, owing to a mistake at the London Post Office when a new clerk (I suppose) put our letters in the Labuan Mail, not knowing that it often takes longer to communicate between these two Bornean Settlements than between London and Sarawak..."

"My darling Ann doubtless keeps you fully advised on all matters of more personal interest, - I am aware that she has informed you of our expectations of a happy family event which we

hope will take place about May... "

To: Samuel Gilfillan, on the same date.

"... A very happy New Year. I hope sixty-one will see the B.C.L. in full swing in the East and that we may all make lotts of money.

"We shall be extremely pleased to see you and Mrs. Gilfillan here, you would enjoy your visit more in the dry season than you could at present, if it can be arranged. I would like also to have our works fairly started, at present we are yet in a pickel. - But we expect another (a very little) visitor somewhere about May, and you would therefore require to come either earlier or later...."

To: Paul Tidman, on January 11, 1861.

"... I am told the sister-ship of the Rainbow took a year getting to Bombay. I trust this one will not imitate her and that we may see the Rajah and St. John across in her..."

The Rajah and St. John were already in Singapore when this was written. The Rainbow finally arrived on February 6th and took them across to Kuching.

The Dutch authorities had just returned two of the principal Malay conspirators to Sarawak jurisdiction, and the letter goes on:

"The Hadji Gaffur is going across [to Singapore] in this ship. Tunjing has lodging in the Fort, - he is a clever-looking Raskal, - says that he feels himself to be of much less importance here where his curious visitors are few, than in Batavia, where he had as many as two hundred in a day."

On 25 February comes another order to Messrs. John Little, indicating further trouble with regard to footwear. After the usual items of food stuffs, together with "golden Hair Oil, Tooth-powder and Soap," it requests by return of steamer:

"2 pairs strong thick Boots of a size with the one sent herewith to your address. Also a pair of Gentleman's Galoshes. I return a jelly mould which is too small, we would like a larger size."

This mention of the jelly mould, ordered on November 2nd of the previous year, gives some idea of the time required to complete any but the most usual household purchases.

To: Samuel Gilfillan, on the same date:

"... Our Sago-factory is just at work, it will take us a few days to get it in good working order, but of the final success there is no doubt. The Rajah seems in good health, still, he is not the same man as when I knew him first."

To: Paul Tidman, on February 26.

"... as an acknowledgement of the interest you have taken in the approaching event I shall entrust you with a delicate commission in connection with it, - it is the forwarding with the greatest possible speed a box expected overland and addressed to Mrs. H..."

To his mother, on the same date:

"... Anna... is to-day a little tired after the exertions connected with the big Breakfast which we gave to all Europeans here at the opening of our Factory, the first powered by steam in Borneo. Sir James Brooke, who has just arrived, was present..."

To: John Harvey.

"26th March, 1861.

"... Sheriff Musahore is said to have been intriguing with the Malays at Kanowit... but the Steamer went there the other day... and a good impression was made. - Meanwhile Muka is being fortified and the River staked, and of course no Sarawak Boats go there, but singular to say several Muka boats have come here, and Pangeran Dipah persists in writing letters to me demanding explanations of any inconvenience to which the Sarawak Govt: puts him. To these I have only returned a verbal answer, urging him to send the Sheriff out of the Country.

"The Rajah seems to enjoy very good health, we have occasionally had him to dinner, otherwise I see little of him, - he intends to go to Bruni next month, - he will have to be careful as I learn that the Sultan is hostile, however, he will be living under the British flag, [i.e. at the Consulate,] if he succeeds the visit will do much good. I will take care that no question which may arise between the Govt: and ourselves shall degenerate into wrangling and refer all delicate matters home."

From: Paul Tidman.

"Singapore, 5 April, 1861.

"... The wondrous box is safely on board the Rainbow and I trust may arrive in time for the interesting event - upon the prospect of which I can only reiterate my congratulations.

"I suppose that with St. John Governor of Labuan* you will get material assistance in the Muka question. If it comes to a fight

and Sarawak licks, what is to prevent Muka becoming part of the country?"

* Tidman was in error here. St. John never became Governor of Labuan. Mr. Edwardes' successor was Mr. Jeremiah Callaghan, and the posts of Governor and Consul General were combined.

"There is an ice ship in last night and I am in hopes of being able to send over a box for Madame and one for Mrs. Crookshank, but have really been too much occupied today to see after it. If it does not come this trip I can only promise you it shall next time..."

These ice ships came from Canada, the ice packed in sawdust. One can only speculate as to how much survived, and for how long, after trans-shipment and a further journey to Kuching.

The next letter is purely domestic in character, and is to his mother-in-law to announce the birth of the first child:

"My dear Mrs. Bruce, - On the 26th April my darling Ann presented me with a little Girl, an extremely fine Baby, she is very large, has large deep-blue eyes and the prettiest little nose and chin you ever saw. Ann... had been in perfect health till the last moment and recovered very quickly, - indeed I think she was singing in bed on the second day, regretting only that she might not get up, and her appearance now on the eighth day is that of perfect health... Ann had an excellent Nurse attending her and we have succeeded in securing a clever well-educated young Girl to act as Ladies Maid..."

This young girl was no doubt one of Mrs. McDougall's protégées of mixed race, from the Mission school. I believe that she remained with the family for many years and was the faithful attendant remembered by my mother and her sisters as Nancy.

Next day he wrote a long letter to Paul Tidman on a variety of topics:

"... The news to-day is of a mixed character and I may as well give you the bad before treating you to a description of the little Lady with which my Wife had presented me.

"Two nights ago at half-past-three Crookshank's dog made such a strange noise that I got up, and looking out saw the sky fiery red. I knew at once that the Factory was on fire, and looking that way saw an awful sheet of flames which it seemed hopeless to

contend with; it was as yet but the drying store burning, but as it was built almost in one with the Factory and Sawmill shed there was little hope of saving these. However, we were lucky enough to do so, the night was calm and nothing but the drying-house burnt, the loss is comparatively trifling - the place was but used temporarily till a brick building could be put up... I think the fire was caused by the Men who watch the place, and who without doubt went in with a light about twenty minutes before the fire broke out.

"... The Rajah's visit to Bruni was a great success, the Sultan came down the ladder to embrace him in a real royal manner, both he, the Tremangong and other Pangerans showed themselves very friendly, and gave the Rajah full powers to settle the country as far as Bintulu. Opposition to his orders the Chop* declares can be rebellion towards the Sultan. The Sheriff it says must leave the country.

* Official document bearing the Seal of State.

"The Steamer anchored off Oya and the Chop was read there, and the people were submissive; three days later they were to have joined the Sheriff who had just been there and bullied them.

"St. John is going across to Singapore in the Steamer, he wants to get a War Steamer to take him to Muka to call upon the people to submit, the great chances are that they will fire upon him which would be a lark as the british Guns would probably then speak first. - The Expedition from here is getting ready also.

"Captain Brooke is going across to meet his Bride with her Brother and his Wife, whether he will be married in Singapore or here I believe he does not know himself, it seems that he would have to wait 15 days in Singapore to get a licence, the Bishop is absent and Koch here [Mr. Koch was Bishop's Chaplain] can't give one at all, which dilemma has given rise to jokes here.

"But I forget my own news... I am Papa to the sweetest little Girl you ever saw. - She is now ten days old and my Wife is as well and jolly as possible, and certainly does not look the worse, - the fact is (between you and me,) that she is a regular Brick!...."

William Adamson was now manager of the Singapore branch of the Borneo Company, and Samuel Gilfillan had been transferred to Bangkok, when a branch was opened in 1856. It was Mr. Adamson who, as stated in Chap. 7, was instrumental in finding Anna Leonowens for her post at the Siamese Court.*

* King Mongkut's letter on the subject is reproduced in

facsimile in The Borneo Story, pp. 48-49.

On 9 May, 1861, he wrote his first letter to Helms as manager at Singapore. It is almost entirely personal, and extends a warm invitation to the Helms to visit him and Mrs. Adamson:

"Any time that you wish to come over either on business or pleasure or for health, you will find quarters with us and a hearty welcome."

To which Helms replied that he hoped to renew old acquaintance before long:

"In any case I intend to send my Wife and Baby across for the change and if you will take care of them I say thanks and reserve my right to return the compliment."

The next few letters deal with the settlement of the Muka dispute. The first, to Adamson on 11th June, says:

"... The Charybdis arrived here from Muka yesterday, and as a Mail is to go in her I send these few lines...*

* H.M.S. Charybdis was the war-steamer which St. John secured in Singapore. She carried 200 bluejackets and marines. (Runciman, The White Rajahs, p.146.)

"Part of the Muka Expedition had left this before the War Steamer came in, and the rest leave in a day or two, - it is probable however that there will be no fighting, the Sheriff told St. John and Captain Keane that he would submit to the Rajah."

And a further letter to Adamson on June 26th:

"... The Muka Expedition has now been away ten days, we have yet no news of its doings, but as the Steamer was to return there at once if it was to be fighting, it seems probable that the Enemy has yielded."

Two weeks later, on July 9th, a letter to Harvey records the settlement:

"... The Muka difficulties are settled, and I believe that peace and prosperity are about to dawn upon Sarawak and this Coast. The Chiefs saw that they had no chance, and the Sheriff accepted the Rajah's pardon and banishment, he left this for Singapore yesterday,* and Pangeran Dipah was sent to Bruni. -

* Musahore lived on in Singapore until 1900. The Sarawak Government gave him a small pension which he supplemented by ship

building. (Runciman, The White Rajahs, p.146.)

"The Rajah's pacific acts have not pleased all, some think that the Natives should have been taught a lesson (and they had it in their power,) but I think the Rajah acted wisely, he made sure of the Sheriff's removal and prevented bloodshed.

"The Sarawak Flag is not likely to leave Muka again, - and if Bintulu is added, as is likely, then the best part of Borneo will be under the Rajah's rule. Muka will soon become the centre of a large trade... the Chinese are preparing to settle there, and we also must buy our Sago at Muka, hence the necessity of the Courier.*

* The Courier was a schooner which Helms had had built in Sarawak on his own responsibility for the coastal trade. She occasioned much correspondence and argument with the Directors, but, he wrote later: "She often was our only means of communication with Singapore, and carried, when other ships failed, valuable cargoes across and proved financially a great success."

"Mrs. Brooke appears to like Sarawak and is very much liked. Her brother Capt. Welstead, and his wife, will remain here a month or two and are then going on to China and Japan."

To: William Adamson.

4th Sept. 1861.

"... I am going across to Singapore with Wife and Child in the Steamer and as we shall probably only be just in time to catch the Mail-steamer. I write here and will add a few lines from Singapore.

"The Rajah has returned from Bruni, having negotiated a new Treaty with the Sultan by which the latter cedes the whole Coast between Tanjong Dattu and Kedurong Point to Sarawak, for a yearly payment of \$6000. This grant includes all the Sago Rivers and Bintulu, (the last unwillingly,) and is doubtless as far as natural resources go the best part of Borneo. The Balanian [Balingian] River the Natives have always maintained to contain Copper, and Bintulu is supposed to be rich in Coal and Antimony, it may on this latter account be as well that it gets into the hands of the Sarawak Government. Other parties, (Hamilton Grey, etc.,) have of late been anxious to get a lease from the Sultan for this ore...

"This acquisition will, for the moment, be a great pull upon the resources of the Sarawak Govt: - but the Sago Rivers are worth having, and if report speak true of the other Rivers they may, if examined, be found to contain good things, the question is will anyone explore and open them? In a political point of view I believe this addition of territory will strengthen the Govt: it is

now freed from the worst part of the intriguing Bruni party, and there will be a large tract of uninhabited country between Sarawak and Bruni Territory. - Bruni itself is in the last state of decay, the Sultan is not likely to live many months and it is not likely that another government can be formed. Sarawak, on the other hand, shows signs of new life and a fresh start, - new fields for Trade have been opened out to the Natives and they are pleased.

"The Rajah goes home by next Steamer and has gloriously terminated his career in Borneo. - He was very unwell but is now much better. St. John goes with him, he is to go to Cuba...."*

* Actually it was to Haiti, where he had been appointed Chargé d'Affaires.

Apparently once in Singapore Helms decided to take a holiday, or else something detained him there, for he did not return to Kuching until the third week in October. Thus, unfortunately, he was not present at an important ceremony which took place about a fortnight after his departure. Had he been there we should, in all probability, have had a precise account of the actual happenings.

Captain Brooke, evidently feeling that he must make some attempt to clarify the situation in order to know where he stood, and also no doubt with the idea of countering the influence of Miss Coutts, which by that time he must have known was being exerted against him, wrote to the Rajah asking him to implement the promise he had made in March 1859 to invest him publicly as his successor. The letter, dated 16 September, 1861, was as follows:

"My dear Rajah, - I shall be very much gratified if you will publicly install me as Rajah Muda before you quit the country. If you will do so, it will not only be a pleasing sign of your confidence in me, but will strengthen my hands in carrying on the Government.

"Yours, etc.,

J. Brooke Brooke."

(St. John, Life of Sir James Brooke, p.347.)

Captain Brooke later based his claim to the Raj largely on three points, of which the legal agreement with the Borneo Company was the first, the meeting at Templer's chambers in March 1859 the

second, and this ceremony, which he claimed amounted to the formal abdication of his uncle, the third.

The two earliest biographies of Sir James Brooke were those of Gertrude Jacob, published in 1872, and of St. John, published in 1879. Since both writers were compelled, of necessity, to refer to the Brooke quarrel because it had a considerable influence on Sarawak history, we must see what they said with regard to this ceremony, and what evidence was available to them if they cared to use it. Their books were followed in 1882 by that of Helms which, while not a biography, is valuable because it was written by a man not in the government service, and therefore able to take a detached view, and who, moreover, knew both parties to the dispute personally and held them both in high esteem. It is the only book to give Captain Brooke's own statement of his case.

What is undisputed is that a meeting was convened in the Court House which was attended by both the Europeans and the Malay chiefs and traders, but the accounts of what then took place differ considerably.

Captain Brooke in his pamphlet stated:

"Sir James Brooke, previous to his departure for England, formally installed Mr. Brooke as the Rajah Muda (young Rajah) of the country, investing him with a sword of state in the presence of the chiefs, and calling upon them to obey him henceforth as their Rajah, as formerly they had obeyed him (Sir James Brooke) as Rajah."

This description, important by reason of its mention of the sword of state, is quoted only by Helms, (Pioneering, p.219,) as are two letters given in the same pamphlet, written by Sarawak officers who were present. He did not give their names though he said that one of them was: "first in position after the Rajah." He was, in fact, Arthur Crookshank, the Magistrate, and his letter runs:

"At the ceremony of your installation as Rajah Muda, the Rajah's speech, as far as I can recollect, was as follows:

" 'Datu, Abang Abangs, Nakodahs, and all present: I have assembled you all here to-day to give you notice of my intended return to Europe. I have dwelt among you for many years; I am now old and in bad health, and soon I may be called away. Before I leave Sarawak I wish to tell you that I create my son Rajah Muda, that I make over the government and the country to him, and I beg and entreat of you all, that as you have loved and obeyed me as your Rajah, so now you will love and obey him as your Rajah. The country is now settled, our enemies are overthrown, and if you continue resolute and united all will go well. I now wish you all farewell; if at any future time you want me, I will always come.'

"By this speech the natives, and I, considered that the Government was regularly made over for good into your hands, and that you are now looked on as the Rajah, for Sir James Brooke is now called the Rajah Tuah; in fact, it is as near an approach to abdication as can be, or rather, perhaps I should say, it is the Eastern mode of abdication. The natives now, doubtless, look upon you as their Rajah and ruler." (Quoted by Helms, Pioneering, p.238.)

The second letter is stated in the pamphlet to be from "Dr. Cruickshank," and is as follows:

"In reply to the letter you wrote this morning I can state that I was present when the Rajah, Sir James Brooke, took his public farewell of the chiefs and inhabitants of Sarawak. In the speech he then made, I distinctly understood the Rajah to say that he entirely placed the government of the country in your hands, and in presenting you with the sword he had carried as Rajah of Sarawak for twenty years, he introduced you to all present as Rajah of Sarawak.

"He at the same time said that, should his health permit of his again visiting his old people, he should try to do so; but I may say that the impression of everyone present was that in giving you his sword he had tendered his formal abdication of the Government of Sarawak." (Quoted by Helms, Pioneering, p.238.)

Miss Jacob in her book ignored Captain Brooke's pamphlet, and confined herself to a short and colourless account of the ceremony given her by Arthur Crookshank, as follows:

"With no suspicion of future misunderstanding the Rajah consented to the installation. The chiefs and principal people were assembled in the Court House and he spoke to them. He was old, he

said, and his health was broken; he felt he could not stay with them longer. He had great confidence in his nephew Captain Brooke and he made over the Government to him. But he himself would come back whenever they wanted him, and if trouble fell upon the country he would certainly return." (Jacob, 2, p.364.)

In a footnote dealing with Captain Brooke's position Miss Jacob, a very conscientious writer, said:

"Anxious to do justice to Captain Brooke in the reference, however brief, that my narrative would necessitate to the subject of his unhappy differences with the Raja, I applied in various quarters for any explanation made by him, or which could be advanced on his behalf, but without success." (Jacob, 2, p.364.)

So that apparently either the "various quarters," including even Arthur Crookshank himself, suppressed their knowledge of the pamphlet, or else she, writing only nine years after the final break, was compelled for discretionary reasons to give Crookshank's paraphrased version of his later letter only; from the wording she used the former seems the more likely. She also added the important detail regarding the ceremony that "no official record was taken of this proceeding."

Coming now to St. John we find that he wrote on August 7, 1863, evidently at Sir James' request, a letter from Port au Prince, Haiti, in which he said:

"If anybody knows the real state of the case I am that person, as I arranged the whole affair. If you remember, when I received notice of my appointment to Haiti, I went to Brunei in the Charybdis and returned to Sarawak in the Rainbow. Shortly after my arrival Mr. Brooke came to me, and asked me whether I thought you would have any objection to appoint him Rajah Muda before your departure for England. I answered that I knew your sentiments on the subject and was sure you would install him with pleasure. He then requested me to speak to you on the subject, which I did; you immediately acquiesced and in a few days after the ceremony came off. I remember your speech to the people and I can distinctly say you never either before, during, or after the ceremony said anything which should have induced anyone to suppose you had surrendered your position as Rajah of Sarawak. You appointed Mr. Brooke as Rajah Muda, or Heir Presumptive of Sarawak, and requested

the people to obey him, as they had obeyed you when present. You distinctly told them that you hoped to come out again to rule over them, but that you feared your failing health would render these visits few. Mr. Brooke at the time understood it in that sense, as I remember well. Let me add that the very title under which Mr. Brooke was installed is a proof of what was meant; had you intended to abdicate you would have installed him as Rajah and not as Rajah Muda." (Rajah Brooke and Baroness Burdett Coutts, p.193.)

In his book, published sixteen years later, St. John gives a somewhat fuller description and adds the extraordinary statement:

"All the Europeans and the native chiefs were summoned to a public meeting. *I was late and did not enter the Court House*, [my italics, E.G.] but from the outside I heard the speeches."

He goes on to say how the Rajah had determined before he left to come to a settlement with his nephew about future negotiations with foreign powers, and with England, and:

"... these terms were reduced to writing by myself and accepted in writing by Brooke. I had seen enough of the misapprehensions which had already arisen from uncertain talk and random notes, so I had every proposition reduced to writing, as I was sure to be mixed up in the negotiations in England." (St. John, Life of Sir James Brooke, p.348.)

So St. John who, on his own statement in 1863, had arranged the whole ceremony, and sixteen years later professed himself as having been so insistent on reducing everything to writing, apparently did not think it of sufficient importance to be in time for it, let alone to see that an official record was taken. Though he, a Consul, who had been secretary to Sir James for so long and was his constant companion at the time, would know, if anyone would, that if the transfer was intended to be in any way binding it must be officially recorded. In other words, if St. John arranged the whole thing he arranged it in such a manner that it could be easily repudiated if, or when, the old Rajah should change his mind once more, and as easily slurred over when history came to be written. For if he was not inside the building he could not have

seen the formal investiture with the sword, which to the native chiefs was a very significant part of the ceremony, and if asked could say with truth that he had not seen it.

There can be no doubt that Captain Brooke himself believed that he had been invested with independent authority to carry on the government; this is made abundantly clear by the impassioned phrases he used in his letter to his uncle eighteen months later, explaining and defending his attitude. It must be remembered that he had been trained to exercise this authority, and had already exercised it frequently during the absences of Sir James from Sarawak. Moreover, from the time he resigned his commission in the Army to join Sir James he had been led to expect it would be his in due course. At the very least it must have seemed to him that such a ceremony, carried out with due solemnity in the presence of so many witnesses, was a "gentleman's agreement" which might be relied on, even though the legal documents relating to abdication had not yet been drawn up. Miss Jacob says that about two months after the ceremony he expressed his wish to be addressed as Rajah and not as Rajah Muda. If, as Arthur Crookshank's letter stated, Sir James was already being spoken of as Rajah Tuah, it would be reasonable that he should think himself justified in taking the former title.*

* Charles Grant recorded that he "fired the royal salute on Brooke's accession, and another royal salute on the Rajah Tuah's departure from the country." (Grant Papers.)

Actually in Helms' letters he is referred to sometimes by the one sometimes by the other, they appear to have been used indifferently by those on the spot. For instance, one business letter written by Helms in July 1862, opens: "My dear Rajah," but observing the formality of writing the recipient's name at the close of correspondence we find: "To: The Rajah Mudah." In fact he had, as became only too clear later on, no legally established right to the

senior title, since no documents of abdication were ever signed, nor apparently even prepared, and once Sir James was back in England the inevitable happened. Miss Coutts was determined that whoever should succeed to the Raj, it should not be Captain Brooke.

When in 1889 Harriette McDougall's brother published the McDougall Journals, together with a commentary of his own, he wrote:

"The quarrel between uncle and nephew... had a secret history which will not here be related, but it can scarcely be controverted that in the differences which have been made public there were faults on both sides." (C.J. Bunyon, McDougall Memoirs, p.243.)

To us, a hundred years later, much of that secret history is plain, but not the whole, for all the personal motives which inspired these happenings cannot be known. That Angela Burdett Coutts hated Captain Brooke is obvious, not only from her actions, but from what she wrote at different times, but the reason for that hatred is not so obvious. Might it perhaps have been that with the return of the young widower from the East she sought the fulfilment of her ambition to rule Sarawak through the nephew as well as through the uncle, and that Captain Brooke's announcement of his coming re-marriage, which put that particular solution beyond her reach, was the spur which drove her on to destroy him? Or was it only that mutual trust and cooperation between the two men was the most formidable obstacle to her schemes, since Captain Brooke, once legally invested as ruler, would have complete freedom of action. Whatever her motives may have been the result was the same; since she so often paid the piper she inevitably called the tune.

Chapter Fifteen

Orchids and Pirates

After their journey home from Singapore Helms wrote to William Adamson on 21 October, (1861.)

"... We arrived off Santubong Sunday night, having had a delightful passage, a smooth sea and cool weather. - After two months absence we looked upon the scenery about Santubong and the view from our own Bungalow with something like enthusiasm. My Wife is now as busy as possible with her pets and flowers, and all being well you will find a pretty place when you come to see us. By the way, we have had a variety of views taken of our place, and I hope to send you some shortly, the Engineer of the Rainbow takes them..."*

* No doubt these views were some of those which Helms afterwards placed in two large albums, and which were presented to the Sarawak Museum in 1956.

It is in the continuation of this letter that we find the first mention of orchids, a subject returned to several times during the next two years. Borneo orchids were practically unknown in Europe and therefore exciting. Helms writes:

"I have sent men to look for Orchides, they have already brought a good many and some are now in flower, and though none of these are very large or showy some are very pretty, and may be valuable. One in particular which is about the size of a guinea, and white dotted with brown, will I hope reach you in flower. Many of them have an exquisite foliage... We might possibly make it worth our while to look after these plants... Would not the Directors like to have some of our Jungle Beauties in their conservatories? If the Singapore Manager took care to have them sent by P.&O. Company's Steamers in good order and at the proper Season this could be managed. By the Rainbow they reach Singapore in good order."

Some times later a botanist, Dr. Little, came out to Sarawak with his wife to search for rare plants. They stayed first with the McDougalls and then at Aneberg, and Helms reported:

"Doctor Little is as busy as a Bee, roaming over the country in search of flowers... living for, and I suspect dreaming about, Orchides."

A more prosaic member of the vegetable kingdom is mentioned in a letter to J.B. Cruickshank, in charge of Kanowit fort, on November 4. It asks him to use his influence with the Malays to collect the vegetable tallow fruit."*

* Vegetable tallow fruit, the illipe nut, native name engkabang which grows wild, most often on river banks. The oil from the nuts, expressed and refined, is used in the manufacture of filling for chocolate.

In the Borneo Company's rather pathetic balance sheet for October 1857, the first after the Insurrection, there are four small credit items concerned with "vegetable tallow," in which a considerable trade appears to have been carried on. On the debit side of that same sheet we read, among other items: "Amount of cash stolen during riots, \$6395.70" and "Mr. Helms' expenses to Sambas [given in error as Sarebas] \$126.82." (The Borneo Story, p.15.)

The letter to Cruickshank goes on:

"While I write the fort is thundering out a salute in honour of our victory at Sadok..."

This expedition, led by Charles Johnson, had been directed against the Skrang chief, Rentap, "Grandfather Rentap" as the Malays called him, a resolute old man who clung to ancient customs, not excluding piracy, and had entrenched himself some 3000 ft. up on Sadok mountain. He had defied the Rajah for eight years, refusing to come to terms with the new order of things. On 5 November (1861,) Helms wrote to Tidman:

"... Sadok is taken. - Johnson got a Twelve Pounder up on the Hill and drove them out, [no mean feat since there were no roads of any kind,] about twelve of Rentap's people were killed, a great many of his followers had previously come to terms. We may now look upon the Country as fairly settled."*

* Rentap died a few years later. The cannon is now in the

Sarawak Museum at Kuching.

Unfortunately, although this was true, business troubles did not grow less. In April 1861 the American Civil War started; it was to last for four years and had a very adverse effect on Far Eastern trade increasing the difficulties of the Borneo Company. On December 10 Helms wrote to the London office:

"We have been doing very little this year, - it appears that the Yankey war is interfering greatly with the sale of Antimony. Our Mine continues to be very rich but what is the use if we can't sell the stuff? I have some hopes that we shall make something out of this new Paint bye and bye..."

The idea was that the manufacture of this paint would make use of the lower grade of antimony ore for which it was difficult to find a market, and that it would be possible to manufacture it in the East for sale on the spot. In the end nothing much came of the scheme.

The letter continues:

"We find it to be of very great advantage to have a Steamer running regularly between this and Singapore which now appears to be so much nearer..."

On January 3, 1862, he wrote to Tidman to wish him a happy New Year:

"... I hope your theatrical performance came off with the usual success. Here we had the usual Boat-races and Games, which went off with great éclat, and the marriage of Mrs. Brooke's maid to our artilleryman gave additional interest to the proceedings.

"The Grants will be going across in the Rainbow next time, en route for home, and Johnson will go with them I fancy..."

There follows a letter written some time in January, largely illegible owing to the failure of the ink. But one sentence tells of Captain Brooke's uneasiness at the falling off in antimony royalties:

"I suppose the heavy shipments of last year had led him to calculate upon an increased revenue from this source, and as their expenditure is increasing it is natural that they should be anxious

at this falling off...."

Nor was this Helms' only worry. The next letter, written to John Harvey on February 28th, deals once more with the question of the old debt which was such a burden to the Sarawak branch:

"You persist in writing about the Borneo debt as if it were chargeable to Sarawak and put yourself in ill-humour with the establishment to the detriment of our present doings... By mixing up all your Borneo transactions you mislead yourself as to what you have done for Sarawak - and what it has done, (and more important still,) may do for you if well treated. It is to an erroneous impression in this respect that I attribute that feeling of mistrust which I have met at almost every step which I have taken to extend our work or develop new sources of profit, - and yet, when I was at home I was urged to look for these, - and in the Company's last letter you say - 'and it is therefore plain that we must look to the development of other sources of profit.' This is precisely what I wish, - but you have invariably discouraged us by unfavourable opinions on anything we did. - We had always to carry out our plans in the face of something like a protest from your side, with the certainty of a harsh judgment if anything went wrong..."

And so on, and so on. The manager of a business concern in the Far East in those days was not able to send and receive letters in a few days by air mail, or to fly home, if need be, for consultation; even with the better communications of 1862 an answer could not be received in much less than three months. The man on the spot had to make decisions on his own initiative and act on his own responsibility. And these conditions, of course, applied with equal force to anyone in charge of the Sarawak Government, as Captain Brooke's correspondence with his uncle shows clearly.

Throughout the business correspondence it can be seen that John Harvey, who seems to have been a man of totally different temperament from Helms, often ultra-cautious where Helms was sometimes over-impetuous, continually acted as a check upon him which, though it may have been necessary at times, added materially to his difficulties. Robert Henderson, on the other hand, showed a

greater appreciation of the peculiar position, which was further complicated by the fact that some of the government officers, (Crookshank in particular,) went in for ventures on their own. Thus it was Crookshank who was instrumental in building the Courier and selling her to Helms for the Company's service, and he also experimented in sugar planting and the timber trade, and refused to cooperate with the B.C.L. in this last, even though Helms approached him to that end. Also staff was not easy to get. In a letter to William Adamson Helms writes:

"... I can't remember having written about wanting to part with Robertson. I don't want to stand in your way if you want him, but I almost think it a pity to remove a man from here who is willing to stay; anyone will go to Singapore, but amongst a dozen there may not be one willing to stay here."

Lastly there was the shipping problem. Often when a cargo of this, that, or the other was ready, no ship could be got. "It is to be regretted that we cannot get a ship to carry what we have," or: "Can you get us a charter?" are recurring sentences.

Captain Brooke of course was aware of all these difficulties, for they were reflected unfavourably in the revenue, and they must have caused him continual anxiety. Upon the success of the Borneo Company at that time depended the life of Brooke Sarawak, even as upon Sarawak depended the life of the Company, they were inextricably bound together, and indeed largely remained so for many years to come. Captain Brooke, however, never attacked or criticised the Company as did some of the officers, St. John in particular. In a letter written on March 17th, (1862,) Helms says:

"I have never doubted that you are great losers by Borneo, and have always maintained this against Sarawak Govt. Officers when I thought it worth while to argue the matter at all... it is but just to say of Captain Brooke that he has never, (as far as I remember,) made any such allusions to me. - I believe he is fully aware that you have been losing and he always speaks of the Directors in terms

of confidence and regard."

There were therefore cross-currents in plenty in the business world at that time, and they were matched by those in the world of politics.

To examine the latter it is necessary to go back to September 1861, when we find that once more Sir James was playing with the idea of ceding Sarawak to a foreign power, though unwilling to commit himself finally unless all hope of British action should be gone. But Belgium had been approached and was interested, and not long before the ceremony in the Court House the Rajah sent his nephew a paper (probably set out by St. John,) outlining their relative positions should the country be ceded. With it he wrote a letter in which he said that he thought it prudent that they should understand "the just limits of rights of which we are apt to speak vaguely." It is obvious that in his attempt to clarify his own position Captain Brooke had written to ask that it should be stated in more precise terms, for the letter goes on:

"... you might have been certain that I could not injure or distress you upon your succession to Sarawak... And believe me, my dear Brooke, your interests have been my case as the advancement of Sarawak has been my sole object in life."

The paper stated that A (Sir James) was the ruler of Sarawak, and B (Captain Brooke) his acknowledged heir and successor. It then asks whether the rights of B, either political or financial were distinct from the rights of A, and the answer given is that the inheritance of B "rests upon the obligation of a promise and his position as heir to the State entails the obligation of obedience. The duties are reciprocal." Furthermore:

"The rights of B in my opinion are not distinct from the rights of A - the rights of B are inheritance upon the death of A and a suitable provision from the state during his (A's) life, and in like manner B would inherit the compensation made to A upon the relinquishment of his position and be entitled during A's life for

a maintenance out of it further." (Rajah Brooke & Baroness Burdett Coutts, p.125.)

The letter which went with this statement contained a very important sentence having regard to what happened afterwards:

"... I have now resolved (for reasons I need not mention,) to limit my share of any arrangement for the future Government of Sarawak to an annuity in part repayment of the sum due to me. Thus the debt owing by the State will be wiped out, and you may take the compensation for the rights which you would inherit. The amount of this compensation must continue uncertain... Upon the general question I will only repeat what I have always said - Sarawak cannot stand without support, and this support I seek from any European nation which will give it upon fair terms..." (Rajah Brooke & Baroness Burdett Coutts, pp.124-125.)

So that on the face of it Sir James offers here to accept an annuity only as his part of any settlement made, while Captain Brooke is to have the compensation.

It appears that Captain Brooke was, on the whole, against a cession to Belgium, though he gave considerable thought to the question. We have seen from Helms' correspondence how difficult the business situation was just then, and there is no doubt that the gloomy outlook influenced Brooke, for without a steady and increasing revenue how could Sarawak continue to meet rising expenses? In a letter to his uncle on 2 January, 1862, he outlined how such a cession could be carried out if it were carried out, in particular that some very positive assurance should be given to the Chiefs that "no interference should result to their slaves, [an important point,] and that the laws would be administered as at present by Native Chiefs." But he went no further than saying:

"I am not at all certain that it would not be the best thing for Sarawak to be transferred. The present government really depends upon my brother's and my own health. If we fail, and we are both very shaky, there is no one to hold things together." (Rajah Brooke & Baroness Burdett Coutts, p.134.)

(Here it might be remarked that although Captain Brooke's own

health never seems to have been very robust, he under-estimated that of his brother, who lived to the age of eighty-eight.)

Sir James, back in England again, hailed this letter as a full acceptance of the Belgian idea and wrote to Miss Coutts:

"Strange, however, that Brooke now proposes to me what I have in vain proposed to him for ten years past."

Miss Coutts did not like the Belgian idea any better than she had liked the French one. She redoubled her efforts to influence the British Government, and on October 18, 1862, Lord Elgin, Governor General of India, wrote to tell her that he had sent a Commissioner to Sarawak "to report on the condition and prospects of the settlement." The Commissioner was Colonel Cavanagh, Governor of the Straits Settlements. (Rajah Brooke & Baroness Burdett Coutts, p.146.)

We will now go back to Kuching earlier in this same year (1862,) and to a lighter aspect of life. Ann had social engagements, and she required:

"1 net Crinoline and 2 pairs soft white kid Gloves. Also 3 pairs cloth Ladies' Boots size of pattern, with double soles and elastic sides..."

There is also a letter arranging for her to have music-lessons from a Mr. Abba, (presumably on the piano though this is not stated.) There seem to have been a lot of parties and an order to Messrs. Smith & Elder, London, at a somewhat later date, requests among other pieces of music, Beethoven's Adelaida; My Pretty Jane and When the Bloom is on the Rye, by Sir Henry Bishop; Warblings at Dawn, by Brinley Richards; and some Danish songs.

Not many weeks later, however, tragedy struck the little community once more. Julia Brooke died on May 9, (1862,) at the birth of her child, a daughter. Harriette McDougall wrote to her brother on the 20th, telling him the sad news, and how Mrs. Brooke,

in an interval of consciousness, had asked her to care for her baby, and how Brooke was very patient and brave, but said that he "must give up all hopes of domestic happiness and work hard at his public duties." (McDougall Memoirs, p.224.)

Helms wrote to Harvey on May 27th as follows:

"I deeply regret to inform you of the death of Mrs. Brooke. She had given birth to a daughter and was to all appearance doing well when she was seized with convulsions, which increased in violence and carried her off. The Child is well. Mrs. Brooke had made herself greatly beloved and her death is a heavy blow to us all. Thus poor Brooke has within three years buried two young wives and his eldest son, surely such a trial few could bear. He appears to bear it calmly but yet he looks a broken-hearted man. Change and stirring work was felt to be necessary for him, and a kind Providence happily provided an occasion well calculated to rouse a desponding mind..."

He goes on to describe an engagement with pirates which later attracted much attention in England, largely on account of the spirited action of Bishop McDougall who took part in it:

"I have to inform you of the capture by the Sarawak steamer Rainbow of six large Lanun pirate Boats south of Bintulu. I doubt not that a full account will be supplied to the papers by the Sarawak Govt..."

"The Rainbow left for Muka and Bintulu, with Brooke, the Bishop, and myself onboard. The object was to build a Fort at Bintulu. I was to be dropt at Muka, and the Steamer to call for me on her return... On the second day after my arrival at Muka six large and as many small Lanun Boats appeared off the place, and anchored about one mile off shore.- Hay, who is in charge of the place, had gone to Bintulu with half the Fort men and the leading Natives, and young Millar and myself found ourselves in a rather uncomfortable position, - the Enemy blockaded the place for two days and, we heard afterwards, meditated an attack, but luckily could not agree about it, they had learnt from some of their captives that a Steamer was on the Coast, and this perhaps deterred them. -

"During the night I induced a party of men to take a letter to Bintulu, they were chased by the Lanuns, but the Boat being very fast they escaped and arrived in Bintulu the following night. Meanwhile the Lanuns remained two days off Muka, and captured there and on the coast southwards thirty-two people. - Upon receipt of my

letter the Steamer was got out of the Bintulu River, and in the morning of the fifth day they came in sight of three of the Boats, which immediately made for the land; the Rainbow was not in time to cut off the foremost Boat but charged the second and the third, these had but time for little resistance. The first Boat which had got near the Coast, opened fire on the Steamer, but the Guns of the latter soon silenced them, and the Pirates and Captives that had escaped the fire fled to the jungle. The Boat was taken by the Natives; as many of the Captives as could be got were picked out of the water, most of the Lanuns were killed.

"It had been ascertained from some of the Captives that the remaining three Boats had stood out to sea, and the Rainbow now followed and in a few hours got in sight of the Boats. These when they saw the Steamer mistook her size, (the yards had been taken down and end on she looks small,) closed together and were quite sure that they would take her. They opened a very heavy fire on the Steamer, but her Guns, which were well served, soon undeceived them. - The Lanuns however fought desperately, and it was thought best to charge them, which they did at full speed till all were sunk. The result as far as is yet known is as follows:....

(Here he gives the numbers of Lanuns and of captives, killed, escaped, and taken prisoner, amounting in all to 340 pirates and 390 captives.)

"Amongst the captives there are people from every part of the Eastern Archipelago, from almost every part of Borneo, Celebes, Java, Singapore, Trenganu, etc., from one Boat one spanish and six dutch Flags were got, how many there might be in the other five is not known. But when I say that these six Boats captured in six days eleven small Boats, that they have now been out seven months, and that this fleet originally consisted of twenty-one Boats from Sooloo, you will understand the magnitude of the misery which these wretches cause. The appearance of the Captives was most distressing, many looked mere skeletons, they get sea-water to drink and unwashed Sago for food, their Limbs are systematically beaten to disable them for making a flight.

"This is the greatest blow dealt to Pirates for several years and if made known in the haunts may intimidate them for a while, but if not systematically hunted down they will continue to infest these Seas. Another Fleet of five Boats passed Tandjong Dattu some days ago they captured a large Singapore Boat, and their companions here say that they are now about Banks Strait; they will return along this Coast and we hope they may then be captured.

"How ruinous such daring and extensive piracy is to trade it

is needless to point out, the native trade in a great part of the Eastern Archipelago is at the present moment paralysed, and will be more so if effectual means are not taken to crush this evil, now so fearfully on the increase.

"It ought not to be necessary to appeal to interests, - humanity would seem to require that a great and Christian nation to whose health and comfort the natives of these Countries so greatly contribute, should protect them on the high road of commerce against such calamities. - England has for years kept Fleets on the coast of Africa, one or two steam-gunboats would suffice here... The Captives of the Lanun pirates are mostly gentle half-civilised people, very much above their captors, than whom I never saw more ferocious, brutal men. When the Rainbow came in sight many of them fell upon their Captives, and even young Girls were cut to pieces by those to whose brutality they had been subjected.

"The Dutch make considerable efforts to hunt down their Pirates, but they seek them in waters which are full of Islands and Reefs, which offer great facility for escape. The coast between Tandjong Dattu and Labuan is the most favourable place for their capture, and a Steam-Gunboat of light draught ought to be stationed there during the southwest Monsoon. - But in order to root out the evil the pirate nests in Balambangan and other Islands in the Sooloo Sea ought to be destroyed."

Bishop McDougall, at the request of Captain Brooke, wrote a full account of this action, somewhat hurriedly in order to catch the mail, and it appeared in The Times. In it he somewhat imprudently mentioned the firing of his own gun, the wording being such that it was plain that he himself had used it. This caused violent attacks to be made upon him in England by those who, as in the early attacks made upon James Brooke, had no idea whatsoever of the general conditions and circumstances, and certainly no personal knowledge of pirates! The letter written by a fellow Bishop to the S.P.G. is a typical example. It referred to "the extraordinary proceeding of the Bishop of Labuan with regard to his shooting the poor heathen instead of converting them," and hoped "that some resolution might be adopted which might free the Society from any share in the blood so thoughtlessly shed." (McDougall Memoirs, p.228.) Much correspondence ensued and Helms' letter to Harvey was

one item in evidence used to defend the Bishop.*

* A copy is among the McDougall correspondence in the archives of the S.P.G.

Eventually the storm died down, and would the sooner have been forgotten had it not been for a second unpleasantness, this time between the Bishop and St. John, which will be mentioned later.

The next letter is one to Helms' mother, undated:

"We have recently had a sad death here, Captain Brooke (Sir James Brooke's nephew,) who is now the young Rajah,* has lost his young wife at the birth of her first child, they had been married scarcely a year. He lost his first wife a few years ago from the same cause, and 18 months ago his elder son. The young lady whom we mourn was loved by all and we feel her loss very much, my wife especially feels it deeply.

* This is the literal translation of the Danish phrase he used: "som er nu den unge Rajah."

"To close, my dear Mother, let me beg you not to worry if my letters are few, and remember that 'no news is good news.' As you know, I have never been a regular correspondent, and 15 years of struggle with the world have given me a very practical outlook. That world has been very different to the one in which you live, and I could write much...."

The end of the letter is missing.

The monthly letter to John Harvey, dated 24 July, (1862,) runs:

"...I wish you could send us a couple of young Lads, such as Stevens was, - perhaps Ragged-School Boys, clever and with a good character. We will make them Engineers, Miners and Traders. Stevens is now very useful, we give him \$60 per month and he is worth it. Such Boys could be trained here for any purpose for which we may want them, they get into the ways of the Natives and learn the language much better than older men. Trained men sent out usually get discontented and difficult to manage, we must have a few of them but the less the better.

"The Pirates have continued to give trouble, they have been twice within sight of Santubong and have been constantly attacking our Trading-boats. One of the Gunboats was attacked by them the other day, and now we learn from Singapore that the Liza Weber, a large Brig, was attacked near Tandjong Dattu and had a narrow

escape. Surely it is time for the Govt. to do something.

"Brooke is still at Bintulu, he has had a meeting with the Kayan chiefs who, with one exception, are going to be friends. The feat of the Rainbow has had a great moral effect upon the Natives in the newly-acquired Rivers..."

To: John Harvey.

Sarawak, 23rd August, 1862.

"... Our Balance Sheet goes home by this mail; as times are we have not done badly, there has always been profit on our shipments, but it is swallowed up in interest on the old Borneo debt, on which acct. we have now paid you something like \$30,000... This is uphill work indeed, and I am only buoyed up by a hope of doing better in future.

"The first three years of my agreement will soon be up, I suppose that the form of an extension is necessary. - I should wish this to be done in such a manner as to ensure me that I shall come in for some of the good things when this Estbmt. is fairly out of the mire, a longer term than three years is in the interest of both parties, if I am to sow here, it is reasonable that I should be ensured participation in the harvest also.

"Captain Brooke has returned from Bintulu, he is in good health and looks more cheerful, he is throwing himself into his work with great energy. The Country is in a satisfactory state politically speaking, but there is much sickness among the Natives."

With regard to Captain Brooke's bereavement it is perhaps not without significance that in the published correspondence between Miss Coutts and the old Rajah, there is a gap of about two months with no letters from Sir James, between 20 June, (1862,) which would be shortly before he received news of Julia Brooke's death, to 3 September. A short, rather cryptic note from Harriet Brown to Sir James is given, written on August 13th. She never sent it and on the envelope was written: "Because not wanted." In it she says that an "indescribable change" has come over the Rajah for some time past, "does it arise from anything that can be remedied? You here called me friend, - try me, treat me as one..." (Rajah Brooke & Baroness Burdett Coutts, p.144.)

Might it perhaps have been that Sir James' conscience was pricking him a little at the attitude which, encouraged by "the Ladies" (as he called Miss Coutts and Mrs. Brown,) he was increasingly adopting towards his elder nephew. At anyrate either he had not been writing, or his letters had been different in tone, though if they exist Owen Rutter gave us none of them, and there is no reference to Captain Brooke's loss.

On August 26th Helms wrote to Robert Hay, at Muka:

"Trade is in a fearful state, and Sago a particularly bad card, and as there appears to be no end to the Yankey war.... it is difficult to see when there will be an improvement."

And to Harvey on September 11th:

"... It should be remembered that there are other interests on the Coast which ought to be looked after; I believe in a considerable trade at Bintulu and Muka shortly, but which has a tendency to seek the Singapore Market. - It is of the highest importance to the Company and to Sarawak that this should be prevented, - hence my wish to have a European at Muka who can assist in this object, find out the resources of the country and advise me as to what is going on."

In October Ann's second daughter was born. A jovial letter from Paul Tidman mentions the event:

"... And so it's been a papa again has it? And which of the tootsy pootsies does it like best, eh? Both very nice I daresay. Like as the arrows in the hand of the giant Even so are the young children, - happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them. So says some clever old party, Solomon I think..."

The Helms quiver was to become full as the years passed, for no less than ten children were born to them, of whom only one failed to survive. The first six were daughters, born in Kuching and christened in the little church. All but one were given names which are found in both English and Danish, but the third, my mother, because she was born during the year when Denmark lost Slesvig, was called Dagmar, after Denmark's much-loved queen of early days, the wife of Valdemar the Second.

The letters for 1862 finish on a novel note in one to William Adamson on November 13th:

"... The Courier is out on a wrecking Expedition, [Helms meant of course, salvage!] The american Ship Independence, from Manilla bound for New York with Sugar and 2000 bales of Hemp, struck on a reef off the South Natunas, knocked a hole in her bottom and was abandoned, Captain and Crew arriving here. The Rainbow and Courier were dispatched, but the former returned without doing anything, she came within three miles of the Wreck but could not safely go nearer. The Natives had stripped the Ship pretty well, but there was still the Hemp which may possibly be got out... Captain Thrane and his crew go across in this Steamer to Singapore...."

Chapter Sixteen

The Storm Breaks

The New Year of 1863 opened to all appearance quietly, and with nothing more to distinguish it from previous years than a first mention of oil. Presumably some Malays had spoken of it, for on January 22nd Helms wrote to Millar, the Company man who had been stationed at Muka in response to his request of the previous September:

"... Earth Oil. The Directors wish information on the subject of the reported Oil Springs, endeavour if possible to find out the whereabouts of these, if they exist at all. Cannot Pangeran Matusin do anything towards exploring for them?"

But it was more than thirty years later, in 1895, before oil was found in any quantity, and then further north, at Miri, where there are now large oilfields which play an important part in the Sarawak economy.

However, although those in Sarawak itself were still in ignorance, the final act of the Brooke drama was pending. From the wording of a letter by Helms to Harvey dated 7th January, it seems as though the Directors in London had heard rumours which made them somewhat uneasy as to what might be going to happen:

"... I believe the Country to be in a very satisfactory state, and there is certainly nothing new to warrant a belief of any unusual insecurity, naturally investments would not be considered as safe as in a British Colony, - but don't forget that this very supposed insecurity gives you advantages which will be gone the moment any political change, or even a prospective change is certain. I know that some of the leading Chinamen in Singapore called upon Colonel Cavanagh immediately after his return from Sarawak to learn the chances of British transfer or protection, - they are anxious to flock in, and then for competition. - I want, if I can get it, a start in the race. - You commit a mistake if you suppose that you

can put off at your own convenience to secure the advantages which we open to you now.

"I have not councilled great investments, and none with only a distant prospect of returns, but have a profound conviction that to do things by half is bad and a losing game. - I am anxious to carry out to the full whatever we touch, be it Ore, Sago or Wood. I believe the opening up of this country to be not far off and would like you to keep your hands in and hold your position."

A further paragraph in this letter is of interest not only for the reference to a new currency, but also because in it Helms refers once more to Captain Brooke as Rajah. It runs:

"Wilson, of H. Gray & Co., writes to Brooke offering to introduce a copper currency in Sarawak, and to divide the profit with the Govt. which he estimates at forty per cent., they seem to be eager about it and to have made the necessary arrangements at Birmingham. I asked the Rajah whether they intend to accept the scheme and whether it is open to competition, - he says that Sir James has written him not to entertain the proposal till it is known what the british Govt. is going to do. It appears to be understood that something is to be done.

"Brooke tells me also that Grant is to be London Agent to the Sarawak Govt. - what he is to do I can't say."

Then, about the middle of February Bishop McDougall returned from his diocese of Labuan and brought a disturbing report with him. In Helms' letter to Adamson dated 21st February is this sentence: "P.S. Such important news as you sent to the Bishop we would like very much to have direct." And in a letter to Harvey, begun next day, we hear what this news was:

"There is a report, sent by Adamson I hear, that Sir J. Brooke is on his way out, - Brooke knows nothing about it, and I trust it may turn out not to be the case. Such a visit could but do mischief. Sir James can't justly interfere with Brooke, who has staked his future in the Country and had it formally transferred to him, - he performs his duties to the satisfaction of all and, as far as I can judge, to the best advantage of the Country. He possesses many qualities well fitting him to govern the Country.

"There can therefore be no cause for interference and the Rajah Mudah would not do well to yield his position, nor does he intend to do this, and it is to be hoped that Sir James will not tarnish his fair name and compromise the interests of the country

he has made, by unjustifiable interference. Should he do so the situation may become a very grave one. - I went yesterday to see Brooke on the subject, he does not conceal his anxiety at the approaching visit. He is going to Singapore in the Rainbow to meet Sir James and Johnson (now Johnson Brooke) who is understood to be with him, and it is to be hoped that the two Brothers will be able to arrange matters comfortably.

"What I now tell may be known to you. Some time ago St. John, (instructed by Sir James,) despatched a paper to the Foreign Office offering this country to the british Govt. and representing it as being in a position to bear its own expenses of Government. - This was done without the Rajah Mudah's consent or knowledge. The first intimation he had came, I believe, from Col. Cavanagh accidentally during his stay here, which visit was, I can say to you, on account of the above-named paper, the british Govt. wanting a report on the Country.

"The Rajah Mudah therefore addressed a note to Lord John Russell stating his desire, and also setting forth the great difficulty in carrying out such an engagement, namely the question of Slavery which had been overlooked in St. John's paper. Of course all slaves would be free on the day when the british Flag should be hoisted here, and equally as a matter of course half the Malays in the Country would become hostile to the Government, which would have to keep on all the principal stations along the Coast, and for this the Revenue, amtg last year to £22,000, would not suffice. - But in fact, the Rajah has no right to transfer the country without the consent of the Natives, they would be glad to have british protection, but I don't think they would submit to be transferred, and I believe myself correct in saying that not one of the Govt. Officers on the Coast would remain at their posts facing such a change without efficient means to carry it out. Col. Cavanagh, in a letter to Brooke just to hand, says that he does not think the british Govt. would take over the Country, at anyrate they have no desire to do so...

"I wish to add that Brooke has always shown himself well inclined towards the Company, and been open and fair in his dealings with us, - it will be the Company's best policy to strengthen his hands as much as it may be in your power. The matter is a delicate one, and Brooke must of course manage it himself, outside interference would only make matters worse. I believe Brooke would be glad to have some paper from you showing that the Company look upon him as the present ruler of the Country, should you be of the same opinion let such paper be directed to me. - Brooke said he was going to write you, he may have explained his views more fully to you. Let me know clearly the position you wish

to take in this matter...."

As pendant to the above, in lighter vein, is the following passage from a letter to Helms written by Paul Tidman from Singapore on February 24th, (this is the letter mentioned previously:)

"There'll be a pretty storm in the mill pond over yonder when the old Rajah gets across... Johnson has come too, having assumed the name of Brooke - and the game, if I mistake not, is to play him off against Captain Brooke.

"The Rajah will probably be taken over in the Scout upon arrival of the mail, and I suppose the Rainbow will be here to go across as pilot. There will be sweet complications I guess, on your side..."

We must now go back to London to see what had happened there.

As we know, Lord Elgin had informed Miss Coutts in October of the previous year that he was sending Colonel Cavanagh as Commissioner to report on the condition of Sarawak. He was supplied with a paper drawn up by St. John which the old Rajah had not seen.* As to Captain Brooke, not only was he not consulted but

* Sir James in a letter from Burrator, dated 7 January, 1863, wrote to Captain Brooke: "St John's 'secret memorandum' I know nothing about, but why should it trouble you?" (Grant Papers.)

it was not intended that he should see it, the whole proceeding having been managed by Miss Coutts and her friends and advisers. Since she was by now the principal creditor of Sarawak who should say her nay?

Helms' letter to Harvey gives us Captain Brooke's political grounds of objection to the proposed cession, namely the question of the status of the native population which he believed would object to transfer though not to protection, and the important associated question of the slaves which, as far as I am aware, has never been given any prominence. In addition to these points Helms, when he came to write his book, added a third, taken from the text

of St. John's paper. Once again he was the only early writer to record it, though having regard to all the circumstances it was important. St. John wrote:

"I have considered that as Sarawak has been benefited by the expenditure of between £40,000 and £50,000 of Sir James Brooke's private fortune, that country should return it to him in £40,000 of five per cent stock. I put it at that, as he will have to provide for his heir, Mr. Brooke, in case the Government should not continue him as Governor of Sarawak for any time. I only suggest this as a way out of a difficulty, if well managed the country would not feel it...." (Quoted by Helms, Pioneering, pp.232-233.)

So that Captain Brooke found himself suddenly confronted not only with the political problems involved in a cession, but also with a return to the knotty financial problem on which three different proposals of settlement had been made by the Rajah at different times, one as recently as in the letter of 5 September, 1861. Here we have not only a representation that Sarawak was in a position to be self-supporting, (and Helms gave reasons why this might not be possible on an annual revenue of £22,000,) but also a proposition which, in effect, would double the £1000 which Sir James was receiving annually from the treasury, coupled with the suggestion that Captain Brooke himself might be turned out of Sarawak and become dependent upon his uncle's generosity. For he had no private means, and though he had lost his elder son he still had the younger one as a stake in the future. Being the recognised heir-apparent, believing himself to have been formally invested with the Raj, having wrestled for years with the various problems of the country and latterly with Sir James' constant vacillations and Miss Coutts' animosity, and being at the time, as Helms put it in his book, "in a morbid and excitable state of mind, owing to his recent afflictions and cares," he wrote his uncle an angry and unwise letter dated 26th October, 1862:

"... The 'memo of terms' which you enclosed to me as having been

submitted by your friends to H.M. Government I must say raised my indignation. The utter abandonment of my Rights and Claims is too complete for even my long suffering to put up with, and when St. John's secret memo was shown to me in which my rights are utterly suppressed, I hesitated not one moment but resolved to take my own course and assert my own rights and those of the people of Sarawak. Colonel Cavanagh is as surprised as myself at St. John's memo, which so carefully keeps back all the difficulties.... Rajah, you must blame yourself that you have forgotten that Brooke Blood runs in my veins as well as in your own. You have overstrained the bow of my patience and it has broken at last. We must try our relative strengths now,* - but all I can say is, that if I become the stronger I shall always bear in mind that you were Rajah of Sarawak, that you are my relative, and that for many years you were my friend. I don't write this in anger but in calm determination, and if justice and right is not on my side I pray I may not succeed.

"I am still your affectionate nephew,
J. Brooke Brooke."

(Grant Papers.*)

* Emphasize the word must and it will be seen that Captain Brooke intended by his choice of words a reference back to Sir James' letter of 24 January, 1860, concerning the negotiations with France. Quoted on p. from Charles Grant's Synopsis in the Grant Papers.

* This letter was quoted by Helms in Pioneering; p.233, but beginning at "I hesitated," omitting the sentence referring to Colonel Cavanagh, and ending at "determination." A passage from it is also given in Rajah Brooke & Baroness Burdett Coutts, p.150.

At the same time he wrote to the Foreign Office breaking off all negotiations for cession, and this letter he signed as Rajah of Sarawak. A few days later, on November 14th, he wrote to his uncle once more, setting out in greater detail and in a milder tone, his defence of his attitude, and dealing with the political points at issue:

"... Further and more deliberate consideration convinces me that I am right to take a firm and decided tone and so to terminate for ever the repeated negotiations with Foreign Powers and also of the British Govt. as far as Sarawak becoming a British colony. Col. Cavanagh's visit here and the rumours that leaked out of his object, rendered a very uneasy feeling among the Malays, and gave

us an inkling of how bitterly they would resent an attempt to alter their form of government or touch their slaves, and with all your influence you will find, if you ever hazard an appeal to them to sacrifice their independence, that very serious consequences will ensue.

"The intelligent classes in Sarawak are not now what they were ten years ago. They know, as well as we do, what the hoisting of the English Flag means. The feeling on this Coast against the Dutch is stronger than ever. Of other European Governments they know nothing, but there are those here who would not hesitate to tell them no good of them. You will find the Officers in the Service are one and all strongly against sacrificing the independence of the country and the expressions I have heard from them are to the effect that they would not dare to look their people in the face after such an event."

Here follows a sentence which shows that Captain Brooke was fully aware whose influence it was in reality which he had to fight:

"There is no denying that the terms you have allowed your friends to offer to the British Govt. amount to an absolute sale of Sarawak and its people should the British Govt. desire it."

No writer, as far as I am aware, has ever given any prominence to Captain Brooke's political reasons for taking the course he did; the early writers, with the exception of Helms, representing the whole affair as a quarrel based on defiance of his uncle's authority, while recent writers appear to take the line that he was unfit to rule. (Runciman, The White Rajahs, p.151, and Payne, The White Rajahs of Sarawak, p.115.) Yet the matter could scarcely have been stated more plainly than in this letter which continues:

"I blush now to think that in weak moments, fearing the effects of opposing you too far, I have seemed to listen to these terms; but thank God it is, I think, not too late yet to save Sarawak from becoming a fifth rate British Settlement, taken over unwilling with the vague purpose of keeping other nations out of it rather than to foster and develop its resources. You have the opportunity now of doing Sarawak the greatest benefit or the greatest injury. Get her British protection and you earn the gratitude of all, native and European. Sacrifice her independence by handing over to England presently or prospectively and you ruin

your reputation for ever and undo all the great work of your life.

"I went over all the ground with you when I was in England, how ineffectually I remember, but now that you have no pecuniary embarrassment I hope that you will not push matters to extremity with me; but I am prepared to go to all lengths to put an end to the present state of matters, which has kept me in anxiety for years, and materially injures the prospects of Sarawak by perpetuating uncertainty. I will say no more except that it is very painful to me to write to you in this strain to hazard an absolute breach with one I have so long loved and esteemed.

"I am still

Your affect. Nephew,

J. Brooke Brooke."

(Grant Papers.) A copy of the letter in Miss Coutts' hand was found among her papers and quoted in Rajah Brooke & Baroness Burdett Coutts, pp.148-149.)

Owing to some delay in the mails the Rajah did not receive the first letter until after the second had reached him. He was visiting Miss Coutts at Torquay at the time, and immediately wrote an answer to the second letter as follows:

"Torquay - 5th January 1863.

"My dear Brooke,

"I have received yours of the 14th November in which you allude to a previous letter which has been lost in the Colombo.

"You cannot expect me to discuss with you the subject upon which you have written, but you can explain your conduct so as to put me in possession of the facts. This I say for your information. 1st. That the recognition of Sarawak is the only question which has been before the British Government since my arrival in England. 2nd. That no proposal has been made to Belgium and the negotiation was abandoned six months ago. 3rd. That you have recently recommended measures to me for the transfer of the country.

"I now desire you publicly to inform the Datus and people that every measure of every sort, relating to the affairs of the State, must according to law be laid before the Council for consideration and decision, that I have always acted strictly upon this law, and of course that any preliminary arrangement proposed by me, would have been so considered and accepted or rejected by the Council or the people at large. But that no proposal whatever having been made or offered by any Foreign Power the Council could not be consulted.

Therefore I rely upon them not to be disturbed by the rumours spread by wicked or foolish persons. It has always been my pleasure to meet my people in order to regulate the affairs of the country. The Rajah has respected the rights of his people and let the people respect the authority of their Rajah.

"This message is from the Rajah to the Datus and people of the countries of Sarawak and is to be read in public and duly recorded and generally made known. To you I say that it is my duty and yours above every other consideration to maintain order and avoid strife, and when the subject shall have been fully discussed I shall be prepared to decide any questions which may then arise, in such a manner as I may judge best for the safety and well being of my people.

"I am,

Your uncle and Rajah,

J. Brooke."

J. Brooke Brooke Esq.

(Grant Papers.)

But two days after this was written the missing letter turned up, and its tone precipitated an explosion. The Rajah started to work itself up into a fury which "the Ladies" did nothing to calm. What they professed to see in the first letter is shown by the following sentence in the Rajah's reply which he wrote immediately:

"... That you would shed your uncle's blood and excite civil war upon a question of your pecuniary rights, is so horrible that I dismiss it at once from my mind... My unhappy nephew where are your suspicions leading you?" (Grant Papers.)

He decided that he must go out to Sarawak right away, but his journey was to be kept absolutely secret. " I must manage to arrive in Sarawak before they know of my leaving England," he wrote to Miss Coutts from Burrator:

"My nephew Charles is with me and accompanies me out,- he feels this more than I do, though equally at a loss to guess his brother's acts or intentions."

It was now that Charles Johnson assumed the name of Brooke as his elder brother had done some fifteen years earlier, and in a somewhat unpleasing letter wrote, on January 14, that he pledged

himself to support his uncle:

"I condemn my brother's acts and have told him so, and will oppose him in every way to maintain your rightful authority as Rajah, and to retrieve affairs in Sarawak." (Rajah Brooke & Baroness Burdett Coutts, p.154.)

Miss Coutts provided the passage money on request:

"My dear Lady, You accustom me to rely upon you in my difficulties and therefore I will ask for £500 at this crisis... It is very desirable to engage our passage soon..." (Rajah Brooke & Baroness Burdett Coutts, P.151.)

And on 15 January, 1863, Sir James left England, travelling overland to Marseilles with Charles Brooke and Mr. La Touche, a friend of Miss Coutts. On the 16th he wrote to "the Ladies" from Paris, and we find a highly significant sentence: "St. John is the man we want at this crisis to enable me to rid Sarawak of my nephew." La Touche, however, proved quite helpful in this direction, and we hear some weeks later that "Charlie Brooke and he have taken surprising to each other. They are regular Chummies." (Rajah Brooke & Baroness Burdett Coutts, pp.159-160.)

Before the Rajah left England he had altered his will. Captain Brooke, though he did not yet know it, was no longer heir to Sarawak. The country had been left to Angela Burdett Coutts. Her friend and adviser, John Abel Smith, writing to Lord John Russell naively remarks:

"The fitness of the selection of Miss Burdett Coutts for this trust is strengthened by the fact that she is the principal creditor of the State of Sarawak, other than, and excepting Sir James Brooke himself." (Rajah Brooke & Baroness Burdett Coutts, p.156.)

And from Marseilles Sir James wrote to Miss Coutts, "it is an inexpressible solace to have placed the future in your hands," and advised her, in the event of his death, to place Sarawak in the hands of Louis Napoleon, Emperor of the French. (Rajah Brooke & Baroness Burdett Coutts, p.159.)

On the voyage he worked out his plan of operations with his nephew Charles, and sent an outline to Miss Coutts. It was, first, to take over the Bankers' account and any revenue payable in Singapore. Then to assign to the creditors, (i.e. Coutts & Co.,) all movable property of the Sarawak Government; the steamer, the gunboats, the war prahus, the guns, small arms and military stores, and the herd of cattle. Then to see Colonel Cavanagh and go over to Sarawak in a man-of-war, anchor below Kuching and send Charles up to make preparations. Then, an hour later, to follow him and walk up to Government House, have an explanation with Captain Brooke and meet the assembled people next day:

"The first demand of Mr. B is to submit to my authority. I shall explain to the Datus and people how false Mr. B has been to me and to them, and then, I think, the next step must be to give Mr. B permission to travel for three years. I will not prejudge, but the more I think of it, the more I think it needful to dismiss him altogether, for it seems improbable to trust him again..."
(Rajah Brooke & Baroness Burdett Coutts, p.162.)

Had the whole business not been so fraught with tragedy for the unfortunate Captain Brooke, the outline of this plan of campaign, and still more the entries in a journal in which Sir James told Miss Coutts how he carried it out, would appear mildly humourous; they could only have been devised by someone faced with the necessity of providing excitement for Miss Coutts and Mrs. Brown. To anyone reading without knowledge of the facts it might appear that an armed revolt was in progress in Sarawak, rather than a quarrel resulting from two heated letters written under almost intolerable provocation. A quarrel moreover which could have been amicably settled if certain people had not been deeply interested in making it irrevocable.

Three of the entries in the journal are interesting when read in connection with Tidman's letter of 24 February. The first tells

how he landed and drove to the Bank: "Folks surprised to see me, but not a whisper of what had occurred at Sarawak," (which was not surprising as nothing whatsoever had occurred!) The second says that he has transferred the bank balance to his account solely, and has had a consultation on the assignment of the Rainbow to the creditors. The third reports the arrival of Captain Brooke in the Rainbow: "Thus we meet upon fair terms." As we know, Brooke Brooke had received warning of his uncle's impending arrival, and therefore the Rajah's careful plans for landing at Kuching were not necessary.

On February 25 Sir James mustered the officers of the Rainbow, explained to them what had taken place and "demanded whether they were true to their Rajah? All true to the backbone. This was the first they had heard and they were taken by surprise." They were instructed to obey no order except from Sir James himself, and if Captain Brooke came on board he was to be told so. "This was well done and the Steamer in my hands!" (Rajah Brooke & Baroness Burdett Coutts, p.164.)

Charles Brooke had in the meantime gone to his brother with a message to the effect that if he submitted to Sir James' authority Sir James would see him, otherwise not, and at the same time the position in which he stood was explained to him. This was that if he submitted his uncle would hear what he had to say in his own defence, otherwise a letter from Sir James would be handed to him disinheriting him and banishing him from Sarawak "for the crimes you have committed against the State and against myself." In three years time his case would be reconsidered.

Captain Brooke gave in his submission in these words:

"Rajah, I submit to your authority. I cannot resist and I will do nothing to injure Sarawak, but I have done what I thought I had

a right to do. I am ready to leave the country."

He furthermore declared that he had addressed Lord John Russell and the Duke of Brabant solely on his own responsibility, without consulting the Council. (Rajah Brooke & Baroness Burdett Coutts, p.165.)

A meeting then took place, and upon such "fair terms" that the odds were three to one, with Captain Brooke alone against the others. A full account of the arguments put forward on either side as far as they were contained in the lengthy letter which Sir James wrote for Miss Coutts, can be found in the Correspondence. Captain Brooke's defence was, substantially, "that he had done what he considered right and that from the urgency of the case there had been no time for delay." A secret report had been addressed by Mr. St. John to Lord John Russell, advocating measures which he considered would be injurious to Sarawak, and completely ignoring his own rights and claims. He had a right and authority to act independently, as the Rajah had promised in 1859 to resign in his favour, and had virtually done so by making him Rajah Muda in 1861. "Many who heard the Rajah's address in Court had so understood him and it was accordant with native custom." His two points of justification were, therefore, firstly the emergency, and secondly his right of independent action. (Rajah Brooke & Baroness Burdett Coutts, p.166.)

That Captain Brooke had any right of independent action the Rajah denied, and said that he permitted no question as to his own position. He was the Rajah and Mr. Brooke his representative in Sarawak, and when he resigned, the title deeds by which he held the country would be transferred to his successor. It was true that he had proposed to resign in Mr. Brooke's favour in 1859, but the latter's "want of straight-forward purpose, his inconsistency and

tergiversation, had frustrated his intention," and nearly led to a rupture at that time. As to St. John's paper he asked what had Mr. St. John's views to do with either the Rajah or the Rajah Muda? It appeared that because a British officer communicated his ideas to his own government the Rajah Muda had revolted against the Rajah and subverted the Constitution of Sarawak by acting without consulting his Council." Why, he asked, should Captain Brooke have recommended a transfer of the country in January, (in the letter dated 2 January, 1862,) and protested against it in October 1862. "It could not be on account of doubts touching his pecuniary claims, for he had under the Rajah's hand the voluntary gift of the compensation, whatever the amount," (i.e. in the letter dated 5 September, 1861.) (Rajah Brooke & Baroness Burdett Coutts, p.166.)

This shows clearly Sir James' complete ignorance of the terms set out in St. John's paper, as indeed he had written to Captain Brooke from Burrator on January 7, for he did not know that a proposal had been made which completely ignored the question of the compensation, and envisaged Captain Brooke's possible dismissal by the British Government with only an allowance from his uncle. No one seems to have enlightened him, and even if they had it is doubtful whether at that stage it would have made any difference.

The Rajah had sacrificed his own rights to advance Mr. B's interests, wrote Sir James further, "and Mr. B had repaid him by breach of trust and threats of violence. It was an outrage upon every feeling of duty and affection... 'The relationship between us has been torn up by the roots and every tie ended...' he reported himself as having said, - 'Revolt ends all obligations and all claims.'" (Rajah Brooke & Baroness Burdett Coutts, p.167.) And at this point Captain Brooke broke down. The two men parted; they were never to meet again.

In the last paragraph of his account Sir James added that it was but just to Captain Brooke to add that he had never taken any steps towards carrying out the intentions declared in his letters, that he had explained the purpose of Colonel Cavanagh's visit and so prevented any uneasiness among the natives, and that he had faithfully delivered the Rajah's message on receiving it. "But after making every allowance he cannot be acquitted of guilty intentions weakly carried out." The final rather nauseating sentence reads: "God has been very good to Sarawak and one more success may place her in safety." (Rajah Brooke & Baroness Burdett Coutts, p.168.)

Next day Captain Brooke applied for leave of absence. He was said to be on a kind of probation, his case to be reconsidered at a later date. The fact of the new will was presumably known only to the principals and their advisers. He had to ask his uncle for an allowance, for:

"I have no money or means at present, my money is gone into the Sugar Company,"* and the Rajah granted him £500 a year. At the end of his letter is a postscript: "The Doctors say my little girl should stay out another year on account of her health; then I should like her to be brought home by Mrs. Cook." (Rajah Brooke & Baroness Burdett Coutts, p.168.)

* This was Crookshank's venture, then in its first stages. Helms mentions it in a letter to Harvey on February 1st: "Crookshank has turned out his first Sugar of which you have samples herewith... I shall be glad if we can be of use in furthering this enterprise... but they will require to import labour for growing Cane...."

In those days the voyage home for small children was considered a risk, on account of the drastic change of climate and of the heat in the Red Sea in ships which had no air-conditioning.

Some seven years later Raneë Margaret, wife of Rajah Charles, had the heartrending experience of losing three children on the one voyage. Ann was more fortunate and made the journey successfully twice, each time with four little girls.*

* My sister and I, as children, used to beg my mother, who was with her both times, to tell us something about the Red Sea or Egypt, but she remembered nothing at all, though over seven when she finally left Sarawak. Years later I learnt that Ann, on whose advice I do not know, plugged the childrens' ears with cotton-wool on which had been dropped a drug, (possibly laudanum,) so that during the critical days of heat they remained perfectly quiet in a semi-comatose condition.

A few days before Captain Brooke left for England he wrote his uncle the following letter:

"Singapore,
February 27th, 1863.

"Dear Rajah,

"... One thing I wish to say to you as gentleman to gentleman, man to man. You go to Sarawak to occupy a house that is sacred and hallowed to me and is full of mementos of those I have lost. You will be within a stone's throw of their graves. I have very peculiar and very strong feelings with regard to that spot of ground. I ask you to respect it, and to make others respect it. You will remember that Henley's estate is my private property and I entrust it to your and Charley's guardianship, not for any value it has of itself, but it has become sacred to me now and I won't bear to think it may be desecrated, - when I am not by to guard it..."
(Grant Papers.)

He sailed on March 4th. Charles Brooke and Mr. La Touche left promptly for Kuching, and Sir James followed a few days later, having mailed his journal to Miss Coutts, together with copies of all the letters which had passed, coupled with a request to make everything known to Messrs. Knox, Fairbairn and St. John. The last sentence reads: "The coup d'état is complete."

A great victory had indeed been won.

Chapter Seventeen

The End of a Chapter

Meanwhile Sarawak still remained in ignorance of what was happening. As late of March 2nd, two days before Captain Brooke left for England, Helms wrote to Millar, at Muka:

"The news here is that Sir James Brooke is said to be on his way out, no one knew anything about it, and this rests on a telegraphic message to Singapore. The Rajah Muda has gone to Singapore in the Rainbow to meet him, and if true he may be here in three days."

There follows a reference to another quarrel, one between Bishop McDougall and St. John, to which it is necessary to refer because it shows how persistently Captain Brooke's friends outside the Government were attacked. It is obvious that in this case too there was some deep-rooted personal antagonism which made it easy to foment mischief and the Bishop had, as we know, been under heavy fire in England on account of the Lanun incident.

St. John had recently published a book in which he made some derogatory statements as to the management of the Mission, attributing to the Bishop, either directly or by implication, every misfortune which had ever befallen it. (McDougall Memoirs, pp.240-241.) There is a reference to the matter in a letter from Captain Brooke to the Rajah dated 21 August, 1862, as follows:

"I wish that Chapter had not been published. I doubt it doing any good and it has made us very uncomfortable here. Mrs. McDougall who I really love takes it dreadfully to heart and I pity her sincerely." (Grant Papers.)

Helms' letter continued:

"You know that St John ran down the Bishop in his book Life in the Forests of the Far East. The Bishop replied by running St John down, upon which the latter writes a pamphlet, the main part of

which you will find in the Singapore paper. The English press has been severe upon the Bishop on account of the Pirate Business, but he is defended against the Pamphlet."*

* In Tidman's letter of February 24, (1863,) was the following sentence. "Poor old Bishop, it will be beastly for him anyway, and we are hoping he will have taken the alarm and come over on a visit to us." In the archives of the S.P.G. is a letter written by the Bishop to his Headquarters during the same week, date February 20th. A sentence in it runs: "... The Rajah Mudah leaves for Singapore by this opportunity expecting to meet Sir J. Brooke there. I fear his arrival in this country bodes no good to me, but I shall, with God's help, hold my ground as well as I prudently can."

Harriette McDougall's brother, C.J. Bunyon, stated that the attack was "replied to with a crushing condemnation of the assailant..." He continued:

"Its importance did not then arise either from the book or its author, of whom it may be said that his posing as the advocate or adviser of Christian missions was simply astonishing, [my italics, E.G.] but from the unhappy conviction on the part of some most capable of judging that the inspiration under which it was written was that of the Rajah." (McDougall Memoirs, pp.241-242.)

And the pamphlet which followed, to which Helms referred, was stated by St. John himself, in his later book of 1879, to have been written by the Rajah, though he (St. John) had signed it. (St. John, Life of Sir James Brooke, p.352.) Here is an obvious clue as to what was at the root of the business. It is also clear that St. John worked in close accord with Miss Coutts, and she had probably seen the MS. of the book, since on February 20, 1862, she wrote to Sir James: "Mr. St John is getting on with his book, he has a nice title."* Rajah Brooke & Baroness Burdett Coutts, p.127.)

* As a result of this quarrel Captain Brooke was ordered by Sir James to have nothing more to do with the Bishop. In a letter from White Lackington 1 Dec. 1862, the Rajah wrote: "... my mind will be at rest when you have the means at command to dis sever yourself from all connection with the Bishop's family." A previous letter had said: "You may regret Mrs. McDougall's position but should not be influenced by it, and the sooner you are clear of

both of them the better for you and for Sarawak." (Grant Papers.) But see Helms' letter to Harvey on 23 Sept. 1863, (in Chap. 18,) describing the Rajah's attitude to the Bishop after Captain Brooke had left the country.

The day after Helms' letter to Millar was written the Rainbow arrived, though she did not bring Sir James and Captain Brooke as everyone had expected, but Charles Brooke and Mr. La Touche. The "Chummies" were come to prepare the last scene of the coup d'état. Four days later the Rajah himself reached Kuching in the Coquette. The population welcomed him with its usual enthusiasm, and then heard to its surprise that it had been threatened by dire dangers of one kind and another. The Council and the Chiefs were summoned, and it was all explained to them carefully. And since the Chiefs loved their Rajah, they naturally believed implicitly everything he told them. In substance this was that Captain Brooke had been deprived of his title of Rajah Muda on account of his crime against Sir James and the ruin which it had nearly brought upon the country. Furthermore, he had returned to England and Sir James had resumed the government, and had brought with him Tuan Muda, (Charles Brooke,) who was in full agreement with him. (Rajah Brooke & Baroness Burdett Coutts, p.171.) "Strange to tell," wrote Sir James to Miss Coutts on March 10th, "not a single native knew there was any difference between Mr. Brooke and myself.... Mr. B's conduct is universally condemned and I cannot perceive that he has any hold upon the feelings of the people... Although his revolt has been upon paper only, yet I have no intention of overlooking an offence which threatened such fatal consequences... After three years I will reconsider the case as favourably as I can, but it must be decided upon the interest of the State and his fitness to be its ruler, - I can never trust him again." (Rajah Brooke & Baroness Burdett Coutts, p.170.)

And in an exceedingly dignified though friendly letter the Datu Bandar, the Tuan Imam and the Tuan Katib, supported by the rest of the Chiefs and members of the Council, advised Captain Brooke that he should on no account resist the man who was as father to him, and that:

"For life or for death, the whole country will hold by no other ruler excepting the Raja in Council, and if it be possible we beg Mr. Brooke to accept this advice from his Father the Raja in Council, because Mr. Brooke well knows that according to Malayan customs, the son who resists his father is accursed." (Rajah Brooke & Baroness Burdett Coutts, p.203.)

One further sentence in the Rajah's letter of March 10th may be quoted:

"The Borneo Co Ltd wrote in great alarm about my sudden return being likely to cause disturbances!! How did they guess this?... My measure of correction will be steadily taken and I have no doubt there will be a change for the better in the removal of Mr. B and other such steps."

By the same mail another letter went to Miss Coutts, asking if he might use "the £3000 you let me have" to build a steam gunboat. "The culprit has been removed which caused you to distrust the government." (Rajah Brooke & Baroness Burdett Coutts, p.172.)

Five days later, on March 15th, he started a second journal-letter to "the Missus." In this he came to the conclusion that Captain Brooke might attempt to annoy him in two ways, firstly by returning suddenly after his own departure, and secondly by trying to make some sort of legal claim. The first I shall guard against, the second I consider mere foolishness. Pray, however, think over and advise upon these points..." (Rajah Brooke & Baroness Burdett Coutts, p.174.)

He goes on to recount the various interviews he had found it necessary to have; firstly with the Bishop and Mr. Chambers, and this baleful sentence occurs:

"The Bishop and his lady I do not trust, and our intercourse will be limited by what is required by good taste and the peace of society." (Rajah Brooke & Baroness Burdett Coutts, p.178.)

And the Bishop, ten days earlier, on March 6th, had written to the Rev. - Bullock at S.P.G. Headquarters as follows:

Private.

"My dear Bullock,

"... I have no heart or pluck left to write about affairs here. Now the old Rajah has come out and turned Brooke off in disgrace who went to Singapore to meet him; he has gone home poor fellow, the victim of injustice and jealousy, his very brother has taken his house and place. Everything will be done, I fear, to prevent his return here during his uncle's lifetime. The people are all bothered and there is no knowing what may be the result of this change, with Brooke we have always been safe and the place prosperous, with the old man intrigue and uncertainty is the order of the day...." (McDougall Correspondence in archives of S.P.G.)

It should, however, be stated here that C.J. Bunyon summed up the Bishop's attitude then and later, as follows:

"To the day of his death the Bishop bore no malice against the Rajah. He imputed his conduct to ill advice working upon a mind weakened for the time." (McDougall Memoirs, p.242.)

And since Bishop McDougall was a qualified physician no doubt he knew what he was talking about. The lion's share of the blame for what happened both then and later must be laid at other doors.

Next Sir James had interviews with Messrs. Watson, Crookshank and Hay:

"Mr. Watson prayed me to treat leniently a fault committed in the heat of passion, arising out of false impression! Mr. Crookshank preserved silence, he being no sympathiser with Mr. B. But Mr. Hay on the contrary placed a mild construction on Mr. B's letters and reduced his conduct to an assertion of his own rights, - at least it was only a private affair - this was the strain, - which I interrupted by telling him that I should not discuss the question, but with such sentiments he must send in his resignation..." (which, in fact he did, though not immediately). (Rajah Brooke & Baroness Burdett Coutts, p.176.)

And here we might note that the Grants, Captain Brooke's brother-in law and his wife, were no longer in Sarawak. Was it by

chance only, one wonders, that an appointment as Sarawak Government Agent in London had been found for Charles Grant just about that time? An appointment for which Helms could see no particular reason, "what he is to do I can't say."

Helms, of course, also had an interview of which he wrote in a later letter: "I gave him [the Rajah] my opinion, which he took without offence." But another portentous sentence appears in Sir James' entry on 22nd March "The Borneo Compy I know and am taking measures to change the Agency of the government."* (Rajah Brooke & Baroness Burdett Coutts, p.178.)

* On 2nd December previously Sir James had written to Captain Brooke: The substitute of Read's firm as Government Agents instead of the Borneo Cpy Ltd., I have pressed upon you..." (Grant Papers.)

From this time onwards increasing difficulties began to beset Helms, arising in great measure from the quarrel and the uncertainty which it, and its aftermath, produced in business circles. Personal relationships also suffered unavoidably. Mr. Bunyon wrote that after the break "the charm of Sarawak life appears to have departed. Old friendships had become cold or had been outraged." (McDougall Memoirs, p.250.) And although the McDougalls remained in Sarawak for another four years, and Helms and his family for another nine, nothing was ever quite the same.

Years later Helms wrote:

"In the Rajah's quarrel with Captain Brooke I experienced one of the saddest of the many obstructions which had impeded the progress of the interests entrusted to me. I had ever been on the most cordial terms with them both, and the feud between them caused me sorrow and much anxiety. The Company had looked upon the old Rajah's retirement as final, and upon Captain Brooke as the de facto Rajah, and so undoubtedly did the Rajah himself, but he was ill and weary. With returning strength the desire arose again to resume for a while the position the attainment of which had been his life's work. Had Captain Brooke acted with more patience and prudence, time would doubtless have softened the Rajah's feelings

towards himself. He was a stricken man, fate had dealt him cruel blows, he never doubted that he had been irrevocably invested with the Raj which he had so long administered and the Rajah's sudden resumption of power led to the deplorable quarrel which placed me in a position of much difficulty."

To us, a century later, having seen the correspondence with Angela Burdett Coutts, it seems very doubtful that the Rajah would ever have changed his attitude, or rather, it would be more correct to say, would have been allowed to change it. But it is impossible to know how soon Brooke Brooke's contemporaries, other than those directly involved in the intrigue, learnt the inner history of what had happened.

Helms' letters to his Directors through 1863 show how anxiously he endeavoured to smooth relations between Sir James and the Company, not only in the Company's interest and his own, but also in that of Captain Brooke, in the hope of an eventual reconciliation. For while he soon realised, and stated in his letters, that to his way of thinking Captain Brooke had no legal remedy, yet the injustice of the whole proceeding irked him, as it was to do for the rest of his life, and was later to make him try to state the case for the nephew as impartially as he could in his book. Concerning the year 1863 he wrote further:

"Mr. Henderson, who was the Chairman and main-stay of the Company, was undoubtedly on the side of Captain Brooke and inclined to support him; the Rajah suspected this and withdrew the Government Agency from the Company, and though he denied that he was influenced to this act by any mistrust or ill-feeling towards it, this action gave great offence to Mr. Henderson, who, considering the great services which the Company had rendered him and his Country, looked upon this as an ungrateful act and began to think that it might become necessary to withdraw from Sarawak. As a preliminary measure instructions were sent to me which, if carried out, would disorganise all the complicated arrangements which had been so laboriously built up, destroy the high hopes upon which the Company was formed, and darken my own future with uncertainty. It was an anxious time full of disastrous possibilities.."

The first difficulty which arose was that of the coal mines at Simunjan the same upon which the old debt was still being debited to the Sarawak branch of the Company. Captain Brooke, some time previous to his departure, had enquired if the Company wished to abandon the lease which, under the original agreement, was theirs. Under this agreement the Company had the privilege of working each mineral discovered; if it did not do so the Government could resume possession and let to others if it wished. The Company seems to have been unwilling to cut its losses in this particular case, and Sir James, buoyed up by the reported discovery of a fresh seam, wanted to regain possession. In a letter to Harvey on March 28th Helms writes:

"I wrote you a short while ago that the Sarawak Govt: want to know whether you have abandoned the Simunjan Mines, copy of Brooke's note on the subject was enclosed, please settle the matter as the old Rajah is likely to moot the subject."

And in a further letter of Aril 24th we find this passage: "... Your letters of 28th Febry and 10th March are received. Contents more than usually gloomy... Such prospects are in themselves cause for despondency, but in my position with this huge coal-mine debt accumulating with Interest and Compound Interest, it is clear that there is no way of getting out of the mire, my courage fails me.... Ought you not to be satisfied with getting back your Capital?... In the long run you would gain more by giving us a fair chance, as matters stand we must lose heart. I hope the Directors will seriously consider this matter in a just and fair spirit. I want but what is just and fair."

Actually, by the time that letter was written, matters had been settled. Sir James had allowed himself to be persuaded into thinking that the Company was in some way declining to work coal which should have been worked, and that it was "pursuing its own interests, political as well as commercial." In a long letter to Miss Coutts, begun on April 29th but containing entries up to May 8th, he outlines first his elaborate plans for dealing with this

situation (which appears to have existed mostly in his own mind.) And then, in the entry for May 4th, we find the following weirdly entertaining passage:

"The finale of all my wide plans of dealing with the B.C.L. ended in an unexpected manner - Mr. Brooke had peremptorily demanded that the lease, as regards coal, should be given up, - and Lo! the Directors have yielded and given it up. My solicitor will bind them at once and then we will make our fortune with coal, like Lady Londonderry. I shall work myself and become a Great Collier, and you will work in white muslin, pink ribbons and diamonds." (Rajah Brooke & Baroness Burdett Coutts, p.188.)

But no great amount of money was ever made by the Rajah, the Company, or anyone else, out of Sarawak coal.

Helms' letter of 28th March continued:

"We are getting on pleasantly with Sir James, he does not interfere much in the Govt. of the Country, and told us that he did not expect to stay out much above a year or so. I believe he has meanwhile disinherited Brooke."

From several passages in letters at about this time it is clear that Captain Brooke's friends still thought that his absence from the country would be only temporary, since the Rajah had stated that he would reconsider the case in three years time, and they had, of course, no knowledge of the new will. The letter goes on:

"We have seven british War-Steamers in the River to-day, they collected here under sealed orders, but it is now understood that they are to cruise for Pirates."

So the gallant fight of the Rainbow had borne fruit, in spite of the unpleasantness which it had caused to the Bishop, and there is a further mention of the steamers in a letter which Helms wrote to Millar on April 4th.

"... In your letter of 2nd March you allude to an excitement among the natives coupled with Pangeran Matusin's name. I can't find that there has been anything the matter, let me know what was the supposed danger. - The talk of a Lanun fleet must also have been a Melano nightmare; there have been none off the Coast, and if any do

come it will be the worse for them, - seven british War-Steamers have just left this River in search of Pirates, they will remain the greater part of this season off this Coast, - they have left for the Natuna Islands in the first instance, from there they will probably be distributed along the Coast. Sir James Brooke is on board one of them. [The Rajah had written to Miss Coutts that he was going on the cruise because he thought it well 'to identify Sarawak with the operations.'] You will have heard that he arrived here and the Rajah Mudah has gone to England, there is some difference between them, but which we hope will be arranged when Sir James returns home, as he proposes to do in October."

Helms' letter to Harvey on 24th April contained, besides the passage regarding the coal-mine, the following:

"The Rajah is well and very friendly, but I am sorry to say he is as hostile as ever towards Brooke, of course I say no more. I gave him my opinion when he came which he took without offence. He is going home in September leaving Crookshank and Johnson, what his arrangements are he has not let out, but he says that he has provided for the safety of the country in case of his death, he adheres to his resolve that Brooke is to pass through a kind of probation for three years.

"The news by last mail were satisfactory. Colonel Cavanagh's report had been received by Lord John Russell, who pronounced it satisfactory, though not sufficiently comprehensive. Lord John is reported to have said that as soon as news of the Rajah's friendly reception in Sarawak had been received, he would propose its recognition and, it is supposed, protection...."

A postscript refers to the marriage of the Prince of Wales to Princess Alexandra of Denmark, which had taken place on the 10th of March and which was naturally of much interest to Helms:

"We have taken a lively interest in the account of the Princess Alexandra's reception, she will surely try to be worthy of the place which John Bull has given her in his big heart. I can imagine nothing more touching than such a welcome to a foreign young Girl by such a Nation. - By the way, my Wife is grieved that we never see the coloured Prints accompanying the illustrated London News, they must be taken out by somebody, would you kindly enquire?"

Letters follow dealing with the small beginnings of trade in canes and in the leaves of the nipa palm, the ribs of which were used in the manufacture of brushes. Then, in the monthly letter to

Mincing Lane on May 26th, is the following:

"While I write the enclosed note is handed to me for you, it speaks for itself, the Rajah wants to transfer his Agency to Read.*

* Mr. W.H. Read was already Sarawak Government Agent in Singapore.

There is, as you will see, no ill will, but he thinks it will work better. Read is here. I was aware that this change was meditated some time ago, but understood it was given up.

"We have been desired to drop the title of Rajah Mudah."

The note referred to runs as follows:

"My dear Helms,

"The enclosed note to Mr. Harvey will explain to you the change of Agency upon which I have resolved. The change here will be little more than nominal and the Company's interest will command the best attention of the Government at all times. In making this change I must thank you for your undeviating attention and kindness in the management of the business entrusted to you. I look confidently to their continuance as the Manager of the Borneo Co. L. in Sarawak.

"Yours very sincerely,

J. Brooke."

Meanwhile in England Captain Brooke, supported by his family and others, had started a campaign to place his case before the public. This Helms thought was a mistake, because of the legal weakness of the evidence. It will be seen that in a later letter he gives it as his opinion that Captain Brooke's claim as co-lessor in the original agreement with the Borneo Company was the only one which could be brought before a court-of-law with any prospect of success.* At the same time some of Miss Coutts' friends professed

* Colonel Cavanagh also specifically mentioned this point, "the claims of the Rajah Muda as a party to the agreement between the Government of Sarawak and the Borneo company." (Rajah Brooke & Baroness Burdett Coutts, p.184.)

to see in the fact that certain Directors of the Borneo Co. were inclined to support Captain Brooke, evidence that the Company designed to get the country into its own hands. (Rajah Brooke &

Baroness Burdett Coutts, p.191.)

It was at this time that Captain Brooke addressed a letter to Lord Grey. It was written from his father's Vicarage, White Lackington, on April 25th, and contained several very important passages, as follows:

"As one of the Committee of the testimonial presented to Sir James Brooke, your Lordship will probably remember that the fund was raised on the express condition that Sir James resigned the Raj of Sarawak to me. This condition was carried into effect by his formally introducing me to the working Committee as Rajah of Sarawak and putting me in communication with Lord Palmerston as Ruler of that Country. In 1861 Sir James Brooke returned to Sarawak and there formally and with the connivance of the Council and Inhabitants, European and Native, invested me with the Rajahship, calling on the people to transfer their allegiance to me and obey me as their Rajah as they had formerly obeyed him.

"Since that Ceremony the people of Sarawak generally, the Borneo company, the Bishop and his Clergy, have regarded me as their Rajah and ruler of that Country. Shortly after his return to England, however, Sir James Brooke commenced negotiations, acting through friends, with H.M. Ministers, and with Belgium, during which he alone was represented as the Rajah of Sarawak, and my position entirely ignored. Naturally I opposed this injustice and the consequence is that Sir James Brooke has suddenly returned to Sarawak and seized on the Govt.

"To avoid a collision which would have been dangerous I met Sir James at Singapore and determined, instead of opposing him in Sarawak, to return to England and represent my case to H.M. Govt. I am now engaged in drawing up a full statement of these transactions to be submitted to the friends of Sir James Brooke with the view of inducing them to urge his speedy return to England in order that the difference between us may be referred to arbitration.

"I shall be greatly indebted if your Lordship will use your influence to stay any further negotiations between the friends of Sir James Brooke and H.M. Govt. until these unhappy differences are arranged..." (Quoted in Rajah Brooke & Baroness Burdett Coutts, pp.191-192.)

Since Miss Coutts was the chief of the "friends" referred to, the text of this letter speedily found its way to her, as apparently did all correspondence, Government or otherwise,

concerning the matter. Whether Captain Brooke yet knew of the will leaving Sarawak to her I do not know, but he did know that she was his bitter enemy, and wrote to Mr. Knox that a "reconciliation of differences can only be brought about by Miss Coutts." It was at this time that Mr. Knox wrote Miss Coutts the letter previously quoted, but he appears, on the whole, to have become a supporter of her policy, though she herself, in a letter to Sir James dated May 25th, wrote: "... I must now say I do not so much care for Mr. K..." (Rajah Brooke & Baroness Burdett Coutts, p.196.) The dice were hopelessly loaded against Captain Brooke from the beginning. As a recent writer has said: "A whisper from her [Miss Coutts] sometimes had the effect of an Order in Council." (Robert Payne, The White Rajahs of Sarawak, p.99.)

On May 8th Captain Brooke wrote to his uncle, saying that he had drawn up a statement of his position, claims and rights, "founded on your own written and solemn pledges,"* and stating

* This was the pamphlet A Statement Regarding Sarawak.
that this would be placed in Miss Coutts' hands with the request that she use her influence to bring about arbitration. If this was declined, he continued, he would publicly assert his rights, and his reciprocity as co-lessor in the Borneo Company's lease would be enforced in the Courts of Westminster. The letter ends:

"I urgently desire a peaceful termination to this unhappy difference by arbitration, not only for your sake, but for the sake of the friends who have armed you with the powers which you are using so fatally to yourself and Sarawak. It has taken long years of injustice and latterly of insult to bring matters between us to this pass. But you must now forgive me for, in my turn, saying 'the time for discussion is past.'"* (Quoted in Rajah Brooke & Baroness Burdett Coutts, pp.203-4.)

* This is a reference back to the letter of 28 January, 1860, which Sir James wrote from Torquay regarding the negotiations with France. The relevant sentence is: "I told you discussion was past

and put a simple question for you to answer, yes or no." (Grant Papers.)

Some three weeks previously, on April 20th, Sir James had written Miss Coutts a letter in which appears the following passage:

"... Mr. B may give trouble but he will ruin himself by the attempt. If he appeals to the British Government he will incur forfeiture here, if to British Law he must depend upon it - if he asserts his rights he must make them good - but how? and at what expense? - whilst I have £500 a year to meet legal expenses which is now allowed to him.." (Rajah Brooke & Baroness Burdett Coutts, p.184.)

And on receipt of Captain Brooke's letter of May 8th, a certified copy of it was immediately sent off to "the Missus," and in the letter which went with it Sir James tells her that the allowance has been withdrawn, and that on his return to Sarawak, (the letter was written from Singapore,) he intends to convene the Council and introduce an Order "to forfeit all Mr. B's rights and privileges and to banish him formally and publicly." He would explain Mr. B's conduct to the people and denounce him as a traitor. "With further disobedience an Order in Council shall declare him an outlaw and a public enemy, and the confiscation of his private property might follow as an extreme measure." (Rajah Brooke & Baroness Burdett Coutts, p.202.)

From Sarawak the following letter from Helms to John Harvey is dated June 12th:

"... I am very sorry to hear that Captain Brooke is agitating at home, this appears to me very unwise, at least at present, both for his own and the Country's sake, he enrages the Rajah while he is still here, master of the situation. He has stated the case in a document which he (the Rajah) invited me to read, and if this is all the case I do not see that Brooke can have a leg to stand on, - he should have waited till the Rajah got home and got it settled quietly. - If the quarrel goes on (and I fear it is even now beyond remedy,) they will ruin the country, the only hope would be british transfer, the old man would not stand out for terms. - The Rajah

looks ill, I don't see much of him and my interview with him was by appointment. - Brooke it seems has hinted that he has the Company's sympathies and the Rajah said he had heard that Mr. Henderson had sent for a friend of his with reference to Brooke's case. - He gave us something like a warning against interference. -

"I read him a passage from your letter of 10th April which is very clear as to the Company's position in this matter. - The Rajah is going to Singapore in the Rainbow with Read for a trip*, and leaves finally for England in October. - It was given out that Brooke's doings [sic]

* In a letter to Samuel Gilfillan dated next day Helms observes tartly: "W.H. Read is at present the great adviser, meddling seems to be his forte."

Those in Sarawak, of course, did not yet know all that was behind these various happenings and rumours. Far from the country being ruined, or Coutts & Co. withdrawing their credit, Miss Coutts and her friends had naturally determined that nothing of the kind should happen. Everything had worked out according to plan, and Captain Brooke having left Singapore believing that the whole matter was to remain in suspension for three years, found that Sir James had returned to Sarawak and had there, to quote his (Captain Brooke's) own statement:

"... Summoned a Council, and in their presence, but, as Mr. Brooke is informed, without their concurrence, decreed the banishment of Mr. Brooke during his pleasure, and the deprivation of his rank and title. Mr. Brooke found himself betrayed, Sir James had induced him to return to England on the understanding that matters were to remain for a time undecided. Not a word was even hinted that he would take advantage of his absence to condemn him before a council of his own people." (Quoted by Helms, Pioneering, p.235.)

Although the first forfeiture of Captain Brooke's title of Rajah Muda had been declared to the Council, no record had been kept. (Rajah Brooke & Baroness Burdett Coutts, p.184.) On Sir James' second return to Sarawak therefore, he proceeded to further measures. He once again convened the Council, "condemned Captain Brooke and decreed that he should forfeit all rights whatsoever and

be banished the territory of Sarawak for the crimes he had committed against the State." (Rajah Brooke & Baroness Burdett Coutts, p.207.) In this proceeding he had the full support of his nephew Charles who, wrote Sir James on August 7th, "reproached his brother with his crimes, declared his pretensions to be false and refused to have anything to do with him...." (Rajah Brooke & Baroness Burdett Coutts, p.205.) And after the Order in Council had been passed Sir James wrote the following short note to his nephew:

"Sarawak - 6th August 1863.

"My Nephew,

"I disinherit you for the crimes you have committed against the State, and against myself.

Your uncle,

J. Brooke,

Rajah."

"J. Brooke Esq."

(Grant Papers. Sir James sent a copy to Miss Coutts, which is reproduced in facsimile in Rajah Brooke & Baroness Burdett Coutts, p.208.)

It was soon after this that Robert Hay resigned. Charles Grant in London had no doubt already done the same thing.

The day after this note was written, on August 7th, Helms wrote to Harvey:

"You have herewith copy of part of a paper made out by the Rajah stating his case against Brooke,* it was sent to me only now for perusal, and there is not time to copy the whole, if we can keep the paper you shall have the rest by next mail.

* Sir James' pamphlet, A Statement Relative to Sarawak.

"The Rajah has requested me to take charge of Brooke's personal property - will you inform Capt. Brooke that I have done so, and await his orders respecting it. The Baby is to go home in charge of Mrs. Penty and I have been asked to do the needful. I don't know exactly what is wanted, if it be the pecuniary part of it I suppose that Capt. Brooke will sanction any payments we have to make. The old Rajah is going home end of September, he looks and is well, much improved by his trip to Singapore, wishing the Company to remain neutral in the quarrel with his nephew. He still

expects recognition shortly, - the new Gunboat has been commenced in Singapore."*

* This was the Heartsease.

And on August 22nd comes the following:

"We have received eleven packages property belonging to Captain Brooke which we hold to his order. The Rajah has also desired me to look after Brooke's Sago-plantation and which I shall be happy to do, - will you get his instructions concerning it. I send you herewith the remaining part of the Rajah's statement. Captain Brooke's pamphlet does not appear to have irritated him much, but it will doubtless make reconciliation more difficult, - the Rajah thinks Brooke is bent on preventing british protection and to this end published such of the Rajah's private letters as would be likely to damage him with the Govt.* We continue on the best of terms with the Govt. that is, and hope that such will also be the case on our side."

* Charles Grant in his Synopsis stated that Captain Brooke although he prepared his case did not publish it, and then only privately, "until he heard that the Rajah (who had got hold of his private papers and his letters to Lords Elgin and Russell at Sarawak) had publicly, without protest from C. Johnson (though he said he tried to keep the Rajah quiet,) deposed and disinherited, banished and degraded him in Council - confiscating his property and even the debt due by the Treasury to him." (Grant Papers.)

Little Agnes Brooke, now some fifteen months old, had been in the care of Mrs. McDougall since her mother's death. C.J. Bunyon wrote that the Rajah wished the child to be sent home to Captain Brooke's sister and had "consented to her going in the ship in which he had taken his passage, under the charge of Mrs. Penty... on condition that the whole responsibility should rest with her." The McDougalls approved this arrangement, thinking that perhaps the sight of the child might soften the Rajah's feelings towards her father. But the Bishop complained to his brother-in-law that "in the absence of Captain Brooke the money responsibilities for the management of the passage were thrown upon him and refused recognition by the Government." (McDougall Memoirs, p.245.) In the end the actual cash transaction appears to have been managed by the

Borneo Company, since on September 23rd Helms wrote to Gilfillan:

"... the Bishop has desired me to write to you about securing a second class passage for Mrs. Penty who is going home together with the Rajah in charge of Brooke's Child which will go under his protection. - Will you also supply Mrs. Penty with necessary means, say £30, to pay extra expenses."

And Sir James, in a postscript to a letter written to "the Missus" on October 2nd, wrote:

"I am bringing home a child in company - Mr. B's poor motherless infant. Of course he will abuse me, but I will heap coals of fire on his head." (Rajah Brooke & Baroness Burdett Coutts, p.212.)

Thus Captain Brooke's last remaining material links with Sarawak were cut. He was never again to see the country to which he had devoted so many years of his life. But the old Rajah was joyful, for in August the British Government had decided to recognise Sarawak as an independent state and to appoint a British Consul. Miss Coutts sent him a telegram announcing the decision, and followed it with detailed letters.

"To apply for aid to any other country than England was a painful duty," wrote Sir James. "Glorious news. I leave Sarawak in perfect safety." (Rajah Brooke & Baroness Burdett Coutts, p.214.)

Operations were completed.

Part Three - Sarawak 1863 - 1872

"How differently would much in history and in memoirs read if the public records accessible to writers were supplemented by the private communications of the actors in the events with which they deal. - History would then often have to be re-written."

L.V.Helms, in a foreword to some extracts which he transcribed from his correspondence.

Chapter Eighteen

Aftermath

On July 22nd (1863) Helms wrote to Gilfillan:

"... I am anxious to learn what the old Rajah has been about in Singapore, and how the quarrel is progressing at home. I can't help thinking that he has the right, or at anyrate the Law, on his side, though we have probably not heard the whole of the Story, but though it be so his action towards Brooke will be looked upon as vindictive. It is strange to observe how he has quarreled with almost all his old friends, even those who have been most zealous in his cause, and Brooke has powerful friends and I suspect they will try hard to bring the old man to book. I only hope the Compy won't meddle, it is not our business."

That the Borneo Company's Sarawak branch did not become more deeply involved than it did may, I think, quite fairly be credited to the tact that Helms displayed in a very difficult situation. Before long a determined effort was to be made to get rid of the Company's influence in the country. But for a short time we will return to the daily life of Kuching and its residents.

By this same mail of July 22nd Helms wrote to Mincing Lane describing the outcome of an expedition which had been made against the Kayan tribes. It had been contemplated by Captain Brooke the year before, as the Kayans persisted in harbouring the murderers of Fox and Steele. Now it took place under the leadership of Charles (Johnson) Brooke, and was brilliantly successful:

"The Expedition, led by Johnson, has returned, having pushed further up the Redjang towards the North East than even the Dyaks had been. - The object, which was to compel the Kayans to give up Fox & Steele's murderers, has been so far accomplished that the Heads of two out of the three have been sent down by the Kayan chiefs, who want to be friendly, which will materially increase our Trade on the Coast."

The third murderer was captured in the following December and executed. Charles Brooke himself gave a full account of his campaign in his book Ten Years in Sarawak. It was the last expedition of any size necessary in the country, and Sarawak was, as a result, "free from internal strife for the first time in her history."

A problem of those days which is touched upon in several letters at this time was the question of medical attention.

For many years Bishop McDougall was the only qualified doctor in the country. Should he be absent, in Labuan or elsewhere, there was no one to take his place. Thus, when Sir James had smallpox, the Bishop being in England at the time, he was nursed by Captain Brooke and Mr. Crookshank, with the help of a missionary, the Rev. S. Horsburgh, and the advice given in a medical book. But when the Bishop was in Kuching, accidents, confinements, cholera epidemics, as well as ordinary ailments, were all dealt with by him, and this placed a heavy burden on him when combined with his religious duties. Mr. Bunyon wrote that the Sarawak Mission was sometimes spoken of as the first medical mission of the Church of England, but that it had never been anticipated or intended that the Bishop should for years be the only doctor there. (McDougall Memoirs, p.37.)

In 1856 Captain Brooke, when in England, engaged a Dr. Conroy, a relative of Mr. Templer, but when he got out to Kuching he found everything so different from what he had expected that he refused to stay, and through some flaw in his agreement he was able to bring an action against the Sarawak Government which was settled in his favour with the payment of damages. "It is most unfortunate for me" wrote the Bishop after his departure, for he had looked forward to some relief from the medical side of his work. Once again he

filled the gap, and in April 1860 the Borneo Company wrote to thank him for his services, asking him to accept a sum of £500 "as a token of appreciation of his great kindness." (McDougall Memoirs, p.210.)

Then, in 1862, a "very young practitioner" came out, but it was not long before he too proved unsatisfactory, and Helms wrote to Harvey that:

"... He is rapidly going to the bad owing to drink, which it appears is the curse of his family... This young man, if he does not leave (as the Bishop has advised him to do,) will sooner or later go the same way, - meanwhile he utterly neglects us, and though we [the Company] pay about \$90 a month we are really without medical attendance and the Dispensary without medicine. A native Apothecary came by launch down from Labuan and by the Bishop's advice I engaged him, he can dispense and treat the ordinary diseases and dress wounds, in fact can attend to our Chinamen, and make up a Doctor's prescriptions. The Bishop has promised to make out an indent of such medicine as is most needed, will you have it sent out?"

Soon after this was written the unfortunate young doctor was got away. A Dr. Houghton came in his place and Kuching's medical problems were solved. He remained for many years.

There is also a letter about Ann's garden, which was always a great pleasure to her, and about which Robert Henderson the Second wrote in 1874, after the Helms had left, that he found the B.C.L. bungalow beautifully placed on a hill beside the river, with a fine garden "still neat, but they say it misses Mrs. Helms." (The Borneo Story, p.56.) In 1863 it was still in the making and a letter thanks Mrs. Little, who with her husband had returned to Singapore after their search for orchids, for some plants she had sent:

"The yellow Roses arrived in good condition and I have had them transplanted to the Rosebed on the Lawn where I hope they will do as well as the previous ones which are all in flower and the pride of our garden, - all the flowers you have sent us are growing, and the grounds beginning to look very pretty...."

Many years later Rane Margaret commented in her book on the fact that the European residents of Kuching tried to grow plants which reminded them of home, such as strawberries and red geraniums, which she thought rather foolish "in the midst of the exquisite prodigality of the tropics." (Good Morning and Good Night, p.52.) Whether Ann's roses would have come into this category I do not know. She did not grow strawberries, for one of my mother's most vivid childish recollections was of being given mashed bananas with strawberry jam, and told that this mixture was the nearest thing to the unknown delights of "strawberries and cream!" But certainly a photograph of Aneberg with croquet being played on the lawn, might almost be that of a party at an English home.

Several letters follow which are concerned with the aftermath of the quarrel; they show clearly the difficult position in which Helms was placed. He had, of course, no precise knowledge at that time of the extent to which Miss Coutts' influence had been exerted, and the facts of the dispute were so tangled that he, in common with others on the spot, may be excused for being somewhat bewildered as to Captain Brooke's exact reasons for taking the course he did. Helms wrote to Robert Henderson on September 4th: "... I hoped that the differences between the Rajah and Captain Brooke might have been arranged on the return of the former to England, and that in any case the Company's affairs would not have been much affected by them. - Mr. Harvey's letter of 10th July is therefore a source of much regret to me, for though it does not say that the Directors side with either party in this unfortunate quarrel, nor indeed that a rupture with the Rajah on the grounds of the discontinuance of his Agency is intended, yet the restraint which the Directors have thought it necessary to put upon me, will very materially check our progress, and puts me in an anxious position, - afraid to go ahead, and yet unable to stop without sacrificing much which, (if the Company means to go on,) will take much time and money to retrieve. - I therefore beg that you will carefully consider your position and wishes regarding the Sarawak

branch before you in any way check us. - I have of course no desire for new schemes, but situated as I am, it is essential that I should make the most of our opportunities, and I am in hopes that there may be no necessity for interfering with these.

"The Rajah is dealing harshly with Captain Brooke, but I think you must ere now have discovered that the latter never was invested with independent authority, this is the root of the case and thus far the Rajah is doubtless right. - What provocation Capt. Brooke may have received I know not, my own opinion is that for years there has been no good feeling between them, and this opportunity of getting rid of Brooke as his Heir and Successor may have been eagerly seized upon. I believe the Rajah to be an uncompromising man, and having once made up his mind that he had a decent pretence for getting rid of Brooke, he will allow nothing to stand in his way, - that Brooke's imprudence has supplied the pretence [pretext] I can't doubt.

"The Rajah believes that you side with Brooke against him, and that you are prepared to support him in his claim on Royalties as Co-lessor probably the only question between them which could be brought before a british Court, but one of peculiar importance. - This has, I believe influenced him in his dealings with us, though he says that he meditated the change long ago, not from any unfriendly feeling towards the Company, but because he saw an incompatibility in the Lessors of the minerals of the Country being at the same time Agents for the Govt. I don't see this and think with you that the Rajah owes a heavy debt to the Company which should have prevented his taking this step if nothing else could.

"But unless you mean to give up it would be a pity to have any difference for the sake of an Agency which is not worth having, or for the sake of a cause which is not based on [legal] right. The Rajah said to me the other day. I hold the Title-deeds of Sarawak and can hand them over to whom I like, - he even hinted that he might return them to the Sultan. - This he is not likely to do, but might to a foreign Power which doubtless would consider the possession of these T-deeds sufficient claim. I fear anything that might precipitate him into a rash act of this kind and which would for ever ruin Brooke's chance."

The monthly letter to John Harvey, dated 23rd September, contains the following passages:

"The Rajah leaves by this Steamer, - he has completely secured his position in Sarawak, and it is probably under this feeling that he has softened of late and been more like what he was in olden days. - With regard to the Company he has taken pains both in private and public to express his friendly feelings. - In a speech

the other night at an entertainment given by him to all the Europeans and principal Natives, he, in proposing "the Company" acknowledged in grateful terms the great services it has rendered to this Country, regretting that the same misfortunes which had befallen the Government had also caused losses and difficulties to the Company, - but that as Sarawak is at the present more prosperous and peaceful than at any previous time, he trusts there is still a great career for it. - The Rajah had, a day or two previously, desired me to assure the Directors of his friendly feelings, he added that he trusted the Company would not look upon the withdrawal of the Agency as showing any ill feelings, in as much as he had during the last three or four years constantly urged upon Brooke that the Company's position as Lessor and Agents also to the Govt. was an anomaly which it would be better for both parties to remove. - With regard to Brooke he said that it is impossible he can ever become Rajah, but that if he did not go too far he would be reconciled to him, and settle an annuity upon him."

Bishop McDougall had been trying to act as peacemaker, and the letter goes on:

"The Rajah has sought the Bishop much of late, they are on dining terms, and on the occasion above referred to expressed mutual good will. - Hay leaves the Mail after this, he thinks that as a matter of right Brooke was in the wrong, and does not intend to espouse his cause at home, but he feels disinclined to serve the Government till his friends shall approve it. - The other Govt. Officers have all signed an address, acknowledging Sir James as the Rajah and binding themselves to obey none but him."

In the old Rajah's letter of August 7th to "the Missus" is the following with regard to Robert Hay:

"... I had before written to Mr. Hay to know whether he could serve the government faithfully and be prepared to act against Mr. Brooke should a necessity for doing so arise. He answered that he had served my government with truth and fidelity and in like manner had served under Mr. Brooke when I had delegated my power to him, but that it would be contrary to the duty he owed Mr. B to serve against him. I wrote this morning to say he had better depart. I have a good feeling towards this gentleman, but of course he could not remain in the service."

(Rajah Brooke & Baroness Burdett Coutts, p.208.)

As to the Bishop, the following passage from a letter written to him by Sir James from Singapore is given by Mr. Bunyon:

"I am sure, dear Bishop, you will be guarded in sending or receiving communications. In our present position correspondence is a dangerous tool, and Mrs. McDougall and yourself will get the credit of doing what I know you would not do." (McDougall Memoirs, p.245.)

One more letter from Helms must be given here, evidently an answer to one written by the Rajah on his way home:

"Sarawak, 2nd November, 1863."

"My dear Rajah,

"We were glad to learn that you had got so far on your voyage in good health.

"Your cautions regarding communications from Mr. Brooke were not needed. I have no doubts as to my duties towards you as Rajah of the country of which I am an Inhabitant, and in fulfilling these I act also in accordance with my instructions.

"Mr. Harvey will have communicated with you respecting the Coal lease, - he tells me that the Company does not wish to relinquish its claim to work Coal, the intention merely being that if they decline to work a Coal Seam others should not be precluded from doing so. - I was glad to see that you propose to settle this and similar questions with the Company in a pleasant and friendly spirit...

"You would be glad to learn that the Company has succeeded in getting the Timber lately shipped from here admitted as first class for shipbuilding purposes....

"It has been very uphill work for the Company, but our difficulties of late years are due to causes which have affected trade generally more or less, taking these into account the Sarawak branch is not doing badly, - and if a cordial understanding is maintained between the Government and the Company I have great confidence in the future. - Sarawak never appeared more peaceful and prosperous than at present, and you may well feel proud to have made such a country as you found it, what it now is. But I hope you will yet reap the fruits of that material prosperity which, but for a combination of unforeseen circumstances, ought long ere this to have yielded you substantial results.

"Procure for Sarawak such guarantee of security as shall give people at home confidence in the stability of the Government now and in the future, and Sarawak will develop rapidly.

"How gladly would I hope that in the prosperous days which I believe to be in store for this Country there should be no Shadow of the Past to darken them, - that while feeling yourself strong here you will also feel that you can afford to be generous, aye Rajah, and merciful, towards him who like yourself gave the best

years of his manhood to the service of Sarawak, and whose great sorrows must command the compassion even of strangers.

"Believe me, dear Rajah,
Sincerely yours,
L. V. Helms."

But matters had gone too far for any reconciliation to be possible. Charles Brooke had written to Miss Coutts on September 23rd: "I wish to assure you that I shall thoroughly abide by the Rajah's instructions during his life and after his death, and you may trust my faith and fidelity to do so.

(Rajah Brooke & Baroness Burdett Coutts, p.214.)

And on September 1st Sir James had outlined to her the elaborate precautions which he took to prevent a possible return of Captain Brooke to Sarawak. Firstly "a man who knows him visits each steamer from Europe upon its arrival in Singapore, and Mr. Brooke's advent will instantly be reported to the Agent [Read] who will place a watch upon his movements." Letters from Sir James would then be delivered to the Governor and the Senior Naval Officer in the Straits, requesting that no aid of any kind should be given him. Should he take passage for Kuching on any ship the Captain and Owners would be informed that their vessel would be confiscated by the Sarawak Government and the crew made prisoner, while at the same time a dozen men were to be sent over quietly as passengers on the Rainbow to guard him on his entering the river. The Chiefs would then go on board and tell him he must quit the territory immediately, and the master of the ship would be ordered to sail "under penalty of capture."

(Rajah Brooke & Baroness Burdett Coutts, p.214.)

Miss Coutts and her friends were thus able to feel quite easy in their minds that nothing untoward could possibly occur, though as far as I know there is no evidence that Captain Brooke ever

entertained any such idea. But even so they were not quite satisfied that the cleanest sweep possible had been made, and in England a plan was put forward to get rid of the influence of the Borneo Company by buying it out. Nor surprisingly the idea seems to have originated with St. John, who, in November (1863) wrote to Miss Coutts from Haiti, pointing out that she had said she felt puzzled as to how Sarawak was to be governed in the absence of Sir James, since obviously, his health being what it was, he could not stay out there for any length of time. "The same thought has occupied me since the Spring," he wrote, and apparently he had thought out a scheme. This was that a Company should be formed to administer and develop Sarawak rather on similar lines to the idea the Borneo Company had considered and turned down in 1858.

(Rajah Brooke & Baroness Burdett Coutts, p.221.)

He goes on to describe at length what he would do, as follows:

"If my idea of a Great Governing Company were carried out and I were to be the Director, I would take out with me eight or ten young men, relatives or friends of the supporters of the Company, and establish one or two with every officer at the out-stations, and I would swamp the influence of those at the capital with three or four new men; in fact at present there are three there who care nothing for Mr. Brooke, The Bishop is my bête noire, as he is not only the enemy of the Rajah, but the warm supporter of Mr. Brooke, over whom he exercises a great influence. I would give the Bishop unlimited leave of absence from Sarawak." (Rajah Brooke & Baroness Burdett Coutts, p.221.)

It is amusing to see that St. John once again cast himself for a leading role in commerce, the Borneo Company's original refusal to make him their first manager must still have rankled, and once again his hatred of the Bishop shows itself, especially in the totally unjustified statement that he (the Bishop,) was the Rajah's enemy. "I own to feeling great repugnance to the idea of quitting the public service," he continues, "and nothing but the thought of

the grand results which would arise from the success of such a company sweetens the unpleasant potion."

The fact that St. John thought it necessary to specify that there were three officers in Kuching who "care nothing for Mr. Brooke," (of whom Middleton would certainly have been one,) shows plainly that there was considerable feeling in his favour, though not, except in the case of Robert Hay, sufficiently strong to bring about resignations.

Some steps with regard to St. John's idea must have been taken prior to the Rajah's return to England, probably without his knowledge, for it was not until February of the following year (1864) that he wrote to "the Ladies" from Bath that he wished to meet them at Holly Lodge to discuss the matter. (Rajah Brooke & Baroness Burdett Coutts, p.222.) But on October 20th Helms' monthly letter to Mincing Lane contained the following passage:

"I note what you say about a possible transfer of this branch. I shall think it hard lines and go into mourning. - I was just beginning to believe in better times. - If it comes so far you will not overlook when making your terms that our trade is now profitable, that from Sago and Wood we are only now about to derive profit, - that in all probability we are about to turn our Antimony Ore to better account than has yet been the case, - and that the greater security and confidence in the stability of Sarawak which must result from british recognition (now certain) will make your privileges, your plant and goodwill more valuable.

"I too think that a cordial good feeling between the Govt. and the Compy is necessary to our success, but hope that this may still be maintained, and if the parties you mention are anxious to have a finger in the pie why not take them in? You would then be sure of hearty cooperation here. It is hard to say what time has in store for this Country, but at present it is peaceful and prospering with an increasing trade. - The Kayan tribes have become friendly, and the production of some of the most populous parts of Borneo will therefore be added to our trade. - In short, I think that the Company has now every chance of accomplishing the object for which it was formed with credit and profit to itself."

The overtures which had been made to the B.C.L. are enlarged upon in a letter to William Adamson on November 21, as follows:

"Seeing that this branch is looking up you may suppose I am not very pleased to be told by last mail that there is a chance of its being handed over to other parties. - Mr. Abel Smith, Miss Coutts and other friends of the Rajah's have, it seems, made proposals. - Mr. Henderson was the only Director in town and the question is therefore deferred, they have also reserved my rights. Henderson mentioned £100,000 - Harvey does not think anything will come of it, - but I am not sure of that. - I have proposed that they take them in and let the old Lady throw in as much money as she likes."

And to the Singapore manager, Mr. Auchincloss, he likewise wrote on the same day:

"Enclosed you have my letter for Harvey... You may know of some of the transactions alluded to, and I need not say they must be kept quiet. We are beginning to get on, and I shall be sorry if they sell us, nor do I think £100,000 enough."

It is clear that Helms did not yet realise the full extent of the intrigue which had worked itself out so successfully, or he could not have thought that the people concerned would be willing to be taken in by the Borneo Company, instead of buying it out, which was of course, their motive. He was, in any case, not the type of man to see through such things very easily, in fact he was rather guileless, more pioneer than business man, at anyrate as the modern world understands the term.

Two further letters deal with the allied subjects of the quarrel and the take-over. The first, on December 8th, is to John Harvey:

"Ere this reaches you the Rajah will have arrived in England and I hope you may have had a pleasant meeting with him, - that he will be induced to reinstate Brooke in his former position I much doubt, but impartial friends may effect a reconciliation. After all that has happened to Brooke in this country he will be happier at home, and the Rajah should grant him a fair pension. But then, if Brooke is not to come out again the Rajah must make some other provision for the management of the Country when he dies...."

One wonders what the reactions of those on the spot would have been had they known that the Rajah's death at that time would have put everything into the hands of Miss Coutts and her friends!

The second letter, on December 27, was to Robert Henderson:

"... I hope that the friends of the Rajah and his nephew may have effected a reconciliation between them, and that neither the interests of the Country or of the Borneo Company may suffer. As advised in previous letters the Rajah gave me every reason to suppose that he is anxious to continue on friendly terms with the Company. If cordiality and mutual confidence can be maintained I should indeed deprecate the sale of this business, but if it cannot be avoided I have nothing to urge against it, for our success (and I have little doubt of this,) must greatly depend upon good will between the Govt: and the Company, and upon mutual support, and I shall have the consolation to know that I have done all in my power to maintain this.

"I can't take upon myself to say what course I would take in the event of the sale of this branch, or what sum of money would recompense me, but my share is determined by my Agreement, whatever I get will have been hardly earned, - but I must take my chance, and I believe you will not sacrifice me.

"On every account I trust that you will come to an early determination.

"You will learn from other letters... all I have to say on business. I am confident of doing well if you will but keep things pleasant."

Unfortunately no correspondence remains for the early part of 1864, or we might have heard more about how and why St. John's great idea came to nothing, as it did before the summer. The fact that it was largely St. John who was behind the scheme would in itself have been no recommendation to some of the Directors, (see note in Appendix.) Also no doubt they considered the terms not sufficiently advantageous to tempt them to give up their unique position in the Sarawak economy, and in the end their decision justified itself, although it was not until the late nineties that the Company began to show substantial profits.

Chapter Nineteen

Timber and Cinnabar

With the end of 1863 the purely personal repercussions of the quarrel died down, more or less, as far as Sarawak itself was concerned. Whatever the native population may have thought of the whole affair it kept to itself. There remained for Helms the hard slogging necessary to carry on the work of the Borneo Company during a period in which the Directors, uncertain of future developments, subjected the branch to a starvation policy which did not make his job any easier. In particular the new timber trade gave trouble. In October he had written to Harvey on this subject:

"... I am glad that you have succeeded in getting our Timber passed as first class, but as already hinted I see difficulties at the moment in working it on a large scale, owing to the jungle fevers which cause great havoc among our Timber Cutters, particularly the Chinese, and to these only can we trust for large supplies. - We cannot get men to work except under heavy advances and on a large scale; this is rather ticklish work, when you run the risk of having your men laid up at any moment. Both this year and the last we had a great number of Logs left in the Jungle from this cause, and it usually is the finest Logs that are thus left...

"Much of the illness is owing doubtless to the manner in which the Chinese live in the Jungle, and now that we have a medical man who attends to his work I hope we shall be able to look after the men, and keep them in better health..."

He wanted a small steam tug to tow the timber rafts; since they came mainly along the coast the men in charge were often unable to stem the tide and were sometimes carried out to sea:

"I believe we would have a great number of Malays working Timber if we could fetch the Rafts, and in fact without something of the kind a large timber trade is impracticable, we want a Boat."

He got his tug-boat in the end, but it was too late, the scheme had been disorganised, at anyrate for the time being. The

Borneo Story tells us that eventually there proved to be a serious and almost insurmountable difficulty, namely, that if the logs had to await ocean-going transport for any length of time, stored afloat as they were, all except those of billian were destroyed by the wood-boring teredo worm.

It was about this time that Sarawak got the copper coinage which had been proposed in the previous January. A letter in November (1863) says: "I suppose you have seen the Sarawak Copper Cent; I am sorry the Company did not take it up." The firm of Hamilton Gray & Co. sponsored it, and had \$30,000 worth of Sarawak cents made in Birmingham.* This firm had also put a good deal of

* The Borneo Co's transactions had, of course, been conducted in Straits currency. Day to day dealings, in the bazaar and so on, would probably have been largely by barter, or else the vendor would have quoted a price in whatever coinage the purchaser happened to have. A Malay phrase-book published in Singapore in 1867 gives a great variety of coins current in the Straits Settlements at the time, including: "Spanish dollars," "Java rupees (old,)" and "Co's R's," (most likely the Hon. East India Co.)

money into Arthur Crookshank's sugar mill, but after much expense had been incurred the scheme failed, probably due largely to faulty planning, and also to shortage of labour. The McDougall Memoirs (p.259) describe the sugar as being "something like congealed treacle, only not so good in flavour." This failure was one of the unsatisfactory happenings of the unsatisfactory years from 1864 to 1867, and although it had nothing to do with the Borneo Company it made for gloom, as a good many people lost money over it.

The McDougall Memoirs have also quite a lot to say about another scheme, started in 1864 by what Mr. Bunyon called "some confiding persons." "Confiding" seems scarcely the appropriate adjective, since it was another of Miss Coutts' ideas! But as none of the early writers were able to mention her by name no doubt it did as well as any other. She asked for, and obtained from Sir

James, a grant of land on which to try out various farming and agricultural experiments, and put her own manager in, so that the whole thing might be kept completely separate from the Borneo Company. At one time she thought of establishing a Moravian Mission there, which would have created a delicate situation for both the old Mission and the new, and one over which Sir James thought that there would be "a grand fight... and the old Bishop would be winner." (Rajah Brooke & Baroness Burdett Coutts, pp.245-246.)

The Bishop was rather acid about the whole thing. He thought the site unsuitable, (it was a few miles down-river from Kuching.) European seeds were sent out which would not grow, expensive cotton gins to clean non-existent cotton, a machine to grind rice that would not work, and ploughs that would not plough, "all for the good of the Dyaks who were miles away and would never look at what was being done." (McDougall Memoirs, pp.259-260.) The climax came when Miss Coutts got the notion that she did not want Chinese working on her estate and wished to import Javanese labour. This roused even the old Rajah, for the last thing desirable in Sarawak was race-discrimination. She tried sago, sugar, indigo and other crops at different times, but always failed, and in the end she sold out at a loss in 1872, having caused quite a deal of worry in one way and another. But by that time both Sir James and his elder nephew were dead.

For the next few years Helms' records are scanty. One letter tells how a sago-mill was being shipped to be erected at Muka, which "will reduce the cost of our Sago by one half," but unfortunately, just at that time the demand for sago fell catastrophically, as he laments in a letter to Paul Tidman who, by that time, had left the Borneo Company and was in London:

"It is past a joke. Are Laundresses and Sago-pudding no longer in vogue, has an ungrateful world ceased to use Sago just as I brought the first Steam Mill over the seas to this distant Land?"

In fact in every way the times were difficult and depressing. It was just about now that the old Rajah, at home at Burrator, wrote to Miss Coutts that "the news from Sarawak is not good, for the commercial distress was being felt there," and also mentioned that Charles Brooke (now Tuan Muda,) had been spending more than he should have done on public improvements and had been obliged to retrench. (Rajah Brooke & Baroness Burdett Coutts, p.274.)

In February 1867 the McDougalls left for home. They had every intention of returning, and left their Mission home and all their belongings just as they were. But as things turned out they never came back, for the Bishop's health, which had been poor for some time, became so bad that the doctors advised him not to return to the East. And after their departure Helms decided that Ann too must go home for a time, since even her robust health was showing signs of being affected by the long stay in a tropical climate. So in the following month she left, taking with her four small children, the eldest not yet six, the youngest a baby of eighteen months.

As the following letter to his mother shows, he and Ann had planned to make the trip home together in the previous year, but had got no further than Singapore. It gives a graphic description of his difficult business and personal conditions at that time:

Sarawak, May 1867.

"Dearly loved Mother,

"A long time has passed since I last wrote to you, a time which for me has been full of worry and trouble. The commercial crisis which has ruined so many has also hit us hard. We have suffered severe losses, and such burdens never come singly; as the proverb says: "If the oats are bad, the horse bites!"

"You know that I had decided on a journey to Europe and had got as far as Singapore when a telegraphic message reached me to say that two of our Directors were on their way from London to inspect the Company's different branches in the East. They have now

left after a year's stay out here, they were two months in Sarawak. The result of this inspection has been that of all the Company's Managers in the East I am the only one remaining in their service. My colleagues in Batavia, Singapore, Siam and Hongkong have left us, and as they were all my old friends this revolution has grieved me much, still more as they who two years ago were rich men, are now poor. I too have lost my savings and am now back where I was when I landed twenty years ago in Singapore. This seems hard after so many years in this uncivilised and melancholy land, but it is no good losing heart, and I hope in God for better times...."

Exactly what it was that had happened or why it happened is not clear; in any case this book is not a business history. Probably the general trade depression, caused amongst other things by the after-effects of the American Civil War, and also by disturbed conditions in Europe, had made the Directors unwilling to sanction any further outlay. And no doubt the uncertainty caused by the financial intrigues set in motion by Miss Coutts was a contributory cause. Two of the men who resigned were William Adamson and Samuel Gilfillan, but it is pleasant to record that they later, with a third partner, went into business on their own account, and in the end recouped any losses they may have had. Nor were the ties of friendship cut, even though Helms no longer worked with them as a colleague.

He, with no capital of his own, could not have taken an independent line even had he wished to do so, and I doubt whether he would so have wished, for I think that, as he wrote once or twice, he had come to regard the development of Sarawak trade as in some sort a mission. Messrs. Harvey and Black drew up a new agreement with him while they were in Kuching in December 1866, which he signed, but which the Directors, from the same obscure motives, afterwards refused to ratify. As far as the Sarawak branch went there is little doubt that the state of Sir James' health and the uncertainty as to the succession made them consider that they might be forced to withdraw altogether. Their refusal to sign gave

Helms much anxiety, but later on, for reasons which will become apparent, he was not sorry that they had done so.

His description of Sarawak as a "melancholy land" was evidently caused by depression at the time, as the continuation of the letter to his mother shows:

"More than loss of money I feel having to send my wife and the children to England. Anna's health has been good until quite recently, but during the last few months it has not been as usual, and the two elder girls are nearing the age at which a cooler climate is necessary for them, - this situation is one of the evils which living in a tropical climate brings with it, and which is doubly felt in a lonely place such as this. No difficulties or sorrows are intolerable if shared with my Anna, who becomes more dear to me each year, and it is my greatest trial that I have had to send her on such a long and difficult journey with four small children, and only a Chinese maid. She went by the Mail via Egypt; this is the shorter but also the more strenuous route, but it has the advantage that I can receive letters from each port, - I have already had two, from Penang and Ceylon, in a few days I hope for one from Suez. I hope that by now she is happily at home with her relatives, - she will write to you dear Mother, and send you the childrens' portraits. If I can I mean to fetch her next year, if she will leave the children in England."

It is in the first letter which he wrote to Ann after her departure, dated March 25, that we find a mention of the development which he hoped would change the picture, both for the Borneo Company and for himself. He writes:

"... I have not yet any certainty about the Cinnabar... While I was in Singapore Walters, [superintendent of the antimony mines] had been at the spot, but the water was still 4 feet deep, and as his work at Busau would not allow him time to lead it off the matter was deferred, he got however more Ore which looks as if broken off a solid vein. I believe he has been at work while I was at Muka, and I shall doubtless learn the result tomorrow. I hope and trust that we may find something that would reward us for our many disappointments and enable me to make my Darling happy. We should not ask for great wealth, - but only so much as would enable us to live together and have the little ones about us."

In the small book which he wrote for his son Helms told how he came upon the very first trace of the metal, which had happened before Ann left for England:

"Behind all the anxiety there lurked a hope which rested yet upon a slender ground. During my wanderings with my magnifying lens among the antimony workers, a red speck attracted my attention, and crushing it on my finger-nail I found it gave a bright red colour; in fact it was cinnabar, the ore yielding quicksilver. It was interesting; for years the small territory of Sarawak had been searched by Malays and Chinese for gold and antimony; and for three years a Mr. Russell was professionally engaged by the Company in the same work, and it seemed hardly likely that so valuable a mineral should be found in any important quantity, - but there was a possibility."

How the hope turned to certainty is told in the letters which follow. A dark-red, water-worn piece of rock, rather larger than a cricket-ball and very heavy for its size, is still in my possession. It came obviously from the bed of a stream, and is probably one of the early pieces of cinnabar sent back to Mincing Lane for examination:

"Sarawak, 9th May, 1867.

"Pr. Water Lily.

"... For many days past I have wanted to sit down and write to you but my heart was too heavy, I had a dreadful gloom upon me. The great trouble of your absence from me is, as you know, not the only one, business letters from home received by this vessel were more than usually discouraging....

"Luckily I think there are some good things in store for us up the country. We have not yet found the Cinnabar vein, but the chances of doing so shortly are, I think, increasing. Unless I am much mistaken we shall find it close to our Antimony at Jambassan, if so it will be a great catch, as there would be no further outlay, our plant and superintendance are all ready. I am pushing the Tram-road through with all speed, in one place we have to tunnel a hill, - the excitement and fatigue of pushing on the exploration has done me good, and the knowledge that if the stuff is found I shall have secured the means of making you and the little ones more comfortable has given zest to the work.

"Sarawak has been intolerably dull since you left... the weather has been bad and Hardie has been laid up with rheumatism and was a sorry companion..."

He goes on to recount the happenings in a grass-widower's establishment, shared during Ann's absence with Mr. Hardie, his second-in-command who later became manager of the Sarawak branch in his turn, though he was not Helms' immediate successor:

"Things are mending a little now Hardie is getting well, and last night we had a game of Croquet, and Watson, St. John, [this was Spenser St. John's nephew,] Hawkins and the Doctor dined with me. Walters had sent me down a magnificent haunch of Venison, when it came on the table however it was so high that it had to be removed, - yet the beast was killed the day before and I had it half roasted next morning."

Croquet seems to have been the general outdoor form of relaxation and amusement in Kuching at that time, and the Helms' set had been sent over by Mr. Auchincloss from Singapore in May 1865. A note at the time thanks him for "the croquet game" and says: "If you will come across we will have the lawn in order."

The letter to Ann goes on:

"When you come out again, (I like to think of it tho' alas so far off,) you will, I think, find lots of fruit, we get a good many Pomaloes and Oranges now, - and as I am having the trees well manured many of them should bear abundantly next year. - I have had the gully cleared, the effect is very fine, - you will find groves of Plantains, Papavers, your pink Guavas, etc., when you come... My Boy who, you remember, was a dreadful booby, I had to send away, and have got an excellent little fellow from Singapore instead. Ah Ling will have to go too, he seems to have become quite idiotic... Our Office is vastly improved since we pulled down the pillars and made the entrance in the centre, it is also much cooler."

Alas, the reason for Ah Ling's idiocy shortly became clear, and is told in the next letter:

"... When I returned from up the river two days ago I found Ah Ling in possession of the small key of your writing-table. I suspected something, and in looking into the winestore I found perhaps 8 or 10 bottles of Sherry, Brandy, and I think Moselle gone, but I could not prove it. We found afterwards that he had carried off some of Hardie's things to the Bazaar, but which in a funk he brought back. However, on this charge I have had him put in the Fort, and on reference to the Court-book I find he is an old offender.

"If we could but find this blessed Cinnabar all would be well, but so far we have not come on the lode, though it continually turns up in new localities.*

* It is typical of cinnabar that it usually occurs in very disseminated deposits. This not only makes mining expensive, but in early days the geologists, with no scientific instruments, found it hard to locate.

"The Rajah caused a letter which he was able to sign to be written to the Tuan Mudah, thanking us for the wishes contained in the paper we sent, and which he expects ere long to be able to answer himself."

This last sentence refers to the fact that in December of the previous year the Rajah had suffered a second stroke.

"Sarawak, 25th June, 1867.

Pr. Heartsease.

"... My days are cheerless enough, there is nothing doing, everything seems dead, - the only thing that keeps me from utter listlessness is an occasional run up the country, - a good mineral discovery seems to be the only thing that would do us any effective good....

"I came home last night from a five days run - I crossed the country with Walters from Jambussan... I had previously fixed the spot on my Chart, and we steered for it through the jungle by compass. It turned out a tough job, and we were one mass of rags before we got to the place, tho' the distance cannot be above three miles it took us nearly four hours, - but we had the satisfaction to come out at the exact spot, and where my Boat was waiting for us. We have now a path cut through and in a few days John Chinaman will be blasting the rocks, and then we shall see what they have to yield us... But you will tire of hearing so much shop; unfortunately my Darling, our happiness depends so largely upon it...

"The new steamer may infuse some more life into the place, one great result will be that I shall have your letters regularly, and I am much in need of them..."

This new steamer was the Royalist. She replaced the Rainbow; Charles Brooke had suggested to Sir James early in 1865 that the Rainbow should be sold, and Miss Coutts agreed to re-loan the money received from the sale for the purchase of a new ship.

About this time Helms received a letter from Bishop McDougall, written from Kensington. He reports himself as having been very ill and still an invalid:

"When I can get out we shall go and see Mrs. Helms and the children. Only Mildred and Mab are with us here, our other two children are at Highgate with my sister whom I have not been able to go to yet..."

This explains how it was that Ann took a furnished house at Highgate for herself and the children. Oddly enough it was, of course, very near Holly Lodge where Miss Coutts and Mrs. Brown spent so much of their time.*

* Four years later Ann once again took a house at Highgate. My mother, who was then about eight years old, remembered that she and her sisters, on their walks down West Hill, used to look out for a china cockatoo in one of the side windows of Holly Lodge. Its appearance denoted that "the Ladies" were in residence. A writer in the thirties (Kitty Shannon in For My Children,) mentions seeing the same cockatoo, or its counterpart, in a window of Miss Coutts' Piccadilly home.

The Bishop continued:

"I hear that the Rajah is again well in health altho' he has lost the use of his right arm, - have not seen Brooke yet, he is soldiering again at Aldershot...."

By August (1867) Ann had decided that she would return to Sarawak in the autumn, leaving the two eldest children in England, and had written to tell her husband so. On August 26 he wrote to her:

"... I sometimes think whether I ought to tell you not to join me, and to let me battle it out by myself, but I can't do it somehow, and so I leave it to God to guide you, - it may be that He may yet make light what now looks so dark, - indeed this morning it looks a little brighter, - hope of finding the Cinnabar vein is again green. - I had lately come to the conclusion that the Bungo Mountain Range is the place that holds it, - and had directed my search in that direction. This morning Simon returned with a piece of Rock richly veined with Cinnabar, - and as there remains no doubt as to where it came from I trust we shall find it at last. - Ore worth £100 p. ton would soon influence our Balance Sheet, - and so, as I said, hope has again entered my heart. - In the face of

the probability of so valuable a discovery it behoves me to be careful not to offend the Directors, - and I have therefore passed over their letter about the agreement very lightly.

"There is nothing new here. Chambers and Mrs. are still here, they both look well and come up to Croquet sometimes, - tomorrow is the 10th anniversary of their marriage and Mrs. C. has sent out general invitations to a musical Entertainment, several of the young fellows from the coast are here just now... Hardie seldom dines at home, and I am left much to myself, but I am getting into the way of feeling quite content with a book. The Royalist has not turned up yet. I wish she would come in and bring me a letter."

At this time there is a reference to Mr. Watson. Helms says that he has had a severe attack of influenza and that he "talked of going to India for a trip, but I rather think he is afraid of losing his place or being sent to the Coast on his return, the Tuan Muda is not satisfied with him." We may remember that Watson had been one of the two officers whose views had not been considered fully satisfactory by Sir James at the time of the coup d'état in 1863, Robert Hay having been the other, so that possibly he was regarded with a certain feeling of mistrust. In this connection a sentence in a letter of Tidman's written some two years before, in March 1865, may have some relevance. Watson had evidently been home on leave, and Tidman wrote: "I hear Watson don't mean to come out again unless your great ruler will place him in Sarawak. It was too good a joke to write and offer him the "residency of Kanowit;" (the outlying fort where Fox and Steele were murdered.) Watson seems to have remained in Kuching, but in 1869 he resigned.

The next letter speaks for itself:

"Sarawak, 21st September, 1867

"My own darling Wife:

"It is nearly a month since I last had a chance of writing you... and it may be that this letter will not reach you, as you may already be on your way back, - the joy which this prospect gives me is saddened by the thought of the desolation of the little ones you leave behind... It is a dull life you are returning to, my Darling, so enjoy yourself while you have the chance.

"I told you in my last that Simon had found a piece of rock with Cinnabar in it, and that I anticipated it would lead to the discovery of a vein, and so it proved. - I went up with Walters to follow up the scent, we had a fatiguing seven days trip and had to sleep three nights in the jungle, but we found a large vein, - extending evidently for miles and showing masses of Rock 12 to 20 feet above ground, all more or less permeated with Cinnabar and Copper. - The surface cannot be expected to show very rich Ore, - and we had no means at hand for blasting the Rock; the Specimens which we got, - and I send to the Directors by this mail, are not therefore very rich, - still they show that both minerals are there. - Should it turn out that Copper is in workable quantity it may be the making of the Company and the Country, - in any case this discovery makes the Company's lease much more valuable. I hope they will take heart and go in for working it, if they don't the Sarawak Govt. will not find it difficult to get others to do it, - But I don't think they are likely to let it go past them.

"It was time that something should turn up, - we were doing little and they want to do less, - in fact want of money to work with makes my position irksome, - this discovery may put all right, - if not they had better shut up."

The hope of Copper proved illusory, but in his book Helms described the first trace of the cinnabar vein which he and Walters found on that September day. It was a huge mass of rock streaked with red and lying across a mountain torrent, having fallen from a crag above. "This" he wrote, "was the first sight of what is now known as the quicksilver mine of Tegora. The discovery led very shortly to labours which made the jungle resound with the miner's blast and the engine's puff!" He goes on to pay a tribute to the "admirable pioneering qualities of the Chinese," to whom it was due that the great difficulties attending the opening of such works were rapidly overcome. "Roads were made, huts built, machinery carried, and ere long the mountain was made to yield its stream of liquid silver." And with these developments in prospect he was able to look forward to Ann's return more free from anxiety than he had been for many months past.

He would feel sad to know that in the end Tegora was abandoned. When, in 1940, Mineral Properties Investigation Ltd. sent a representative from London to view it, he reported that there was abundant evidence of native mercury all over the place, but he did not think it worth while to enter "the old workings in the Peaks, the 500 foot mine where the old rails lie," the rails, wheels and bits of machinery, some of which may even date from those first days. "Nothing more has been done at Tegora, and it is now unlikely that anything will be," says The Borneo Story. And the antimony which played such a large part in early Borneo Company history has been worked out:

"At the turn of the century attention was turning from antimony, quicksilver and coal, to what was to prove for many years the foundation of the Company's fortunes in Sarawak, namely gold." (The Borneo Story, p.67.)

Nevertheless, for many years Tegora played a large and valuable part in the Sarawak economy; and it also played a decisive part in Helms' life, for the discovery of quicksilver gave the Directors that encouragement which they so much needed.

Chapter Twenty

Two Lives Reach Their End

Ann left England on her return journey by way of the Cape in the autumn of 1867, leaving the two elder children with her parents. Just before she sailed Helms received another letter, dated August 30, from Bishop McDougall, who was still hoping that he might be able to return, "but I make no rash vows as yet, - my wife is very delicate and I far from strong." They had met Ann at Randalls Park, the Leatherhead home of Robert Henderson. A niece of Mrs. Chambers was to sail with Ann and would be a help to her with the two younger children. Then comes the following significant sentence:

"I have not seen the Rajah yet; the last I heard of him was that he was in Hampshire with C. Stuart,* but Miss Coutts keeps a sharp eye on him and does not let him go far out of her ken, or allow his old friends to see him. I have only seen Brooke once, he is away farming in Kent and does not come often to London...."

* Charles Stuart of Basingstoke, the Rajah's cousin.

Attempts to heal the breach between uncle and nephew were continually made by Captain Brooke's family and friends. Possibly it was due to some of these that he abandoned his idea of forcing the issue upon the one legal point which might have been decided in his favour, that of the original agreement with the Borneo Company. Miss Coutts was apprehensive that these peacemaking efforts might succeed, and lost no opportunity of encouraging the Rajah in his uncompromising attitude. Mrs. Templer tried to restore the friendship between Sir James and her husband, the result was the same. Mr. Henderson was also under suspicion, and Miss Coutts did not care for Charles Brooke either, though she does not seem to have had the hatred for him that she had for his brother, (see Note

4 in Appendix.) No opportunity had been neglected of presenting Captain Brooke's conduct in the worst possible light. Amongst other things he had been accused of having threatened to reduce the amount of money which the old Rajah obtained yearly from Sarawak. Worse still, in a letter to "My dear Ladies," dated Singapore, 20 June, 1863, Sir James had written:

"By the bye, I forgot to tell you a dutiful and pleasant trait in my nephew's character. - He told a gentleman here before he left that 'if he stayed he could kill the Rajah in two months!' Dutiful certainly!" (Rajah Brooke & Baroness Burdett Coutts, p.202.)

One can imagine the effect this must have produced on its recipients!

If we may judge by another letter some two months later, on August 7th, it was Charles who was the gentleman in question. In a long summary of what Charles had said to him and written to his parents, regarding his attitude of unreserved support of his uncle, Sir James' final sentence reads:

"That Mr. B knew too that he must kill the Rajah before he could usurp the Raj, and it was a worthy act for a nephew to contemplate or perform." (Rajah Brooke & Baroness Burdett Coutts, p.206.)

That these accusations were publicly bandied about is shown by two extracts from Charles Grant's letter to Helms of February 18, 1882. The first, dealing with the financial insinuation, was as follows:

"I think I may state it as a fact that he [the Rajah] never ceased to receive £1000 per annum from the Sarawak Treasury, (either direct or through the Borneo Co.) up to the day of his death. True, at one time, after the Malay outbreak when we were in financial difficulties Brooke wrote to his Uncle that he might have to make some sacrifice, in common with himself and the rest of us serving on the spot, but I don't think this reduction was ever made, and as I was for some time in charge of the Treasury, and often in charge of the Government at Kuching during the temporary absences of Brooke and Johnson, I think I have some authority for saying what I have. In fact, the accusation that Brooke had threatened to reduce his uncle's means of living, was only an

after-thought trumped up after the final breach, and it appeared then important to those wishing to blacken Brooke's character to build up every kind of slander."

The second extract refers to Thomas Fairbairn's letter (quoted in note to Chapter 12,) which Grant described as "a most intemperate one." It reads:

"He and Abel Smith, backed up by Lady Coutts and Mrs. Brown, were then all talking wildly about the wicked nephew who wished to shed his uncle's blood!!!"

It is interesting to speculate on what the outcome in law might have been had Captain Brooke kept to his original intention.

With regard to the whole situation C.J. Bunyon in his commentary on the McDougall Memoirs wrote as follows:

"Sir James Brooke had made his nephew Rajah Mudah, associating him with himself in the Raj, and had repeatedly pledged himself that he should be his heir; he had even done so in writing to Mr. Grant of Kilgraston, before the marriage of his daughter with Captain Brooke, and thenceforth he had no right to offer the country to England, France, Belgium or Holland without the consent of his nephew, who had, moreover, made many sacrifices and suffered much for Sarawak." (McDougall Memoirs, pp.242-244.)

And Helms wrote:

"I have endeavoured impartially to state both sides of this case, but do not hesitate to avow, that in my opinion the conclusion to be drawn is that Sir James Brooke had, irrevocably and for substantial considerations, acknowledged his nephew as his heir and successor; the latter was, in fact, a partner in the Government and it ought no longer to have been in the Rajah's power to disturb this arrangement; nor is it likely that he would have attempted this but for the misfortunes which overtook Sarawak in the Chinese Insurrection, and the consequent impoverishment of himself and his Government. These misfortunes tended as already hinted, to obscure his mind and warp his judgment, and vacillation and uncertainty were but too apparent in his subsequent action in this matter." (Helms, Pioneering, p.236.)

This contention would of course, have worked in both directions. If it were impossible for the uncle legally to disturb the position of the nephew it follows that it would also have been impossible for the uncle to abdicate without making specific

adjustments with regard to the obligation of joint security for the State debts. Charles Grant's letter referred to this point also, as follows:

"The contentions you make that the Rajah and Brooke were partners in the Government and Country - and that their joint security for the State debts being necessary it was impossible for the former to abdicate - appear to be just conclusions - but at the same time it reduced the act of formal abdication which I witnessed into an unmeaning and not very honest force. As far as I recollect Brooke, as ruler of Sarawak, did acquire its debts and paid the interest to the Borneo Co."

In 1865 the Rajah remade his will and made Charles Brooke his heir. We do not know what Miss Coutts' reactions were, but obviously she acquiesced, indeed there was nothing else she could have done. On September 15 of that year Sir James wrote to St. John:

"The Tuan Muda has unreservedly consented to become my heir, and I have left it with him to adopt his nephew Hope as his successor if he wishes to do so. I would not injure the poor boy's prospects if I can help it." (St. John, Life of Sir James Brooke, pp.371-372. Rajah Brooke and Baroness Burdett Coutts, p.247.)

Sarawak having been recognised as a sovereign state by the British Government a British consul was appointed at Kuching in 1864, but he found very little to do and reported that only an honorary vice-consul would be needed. After the breakdown of the Governing Company idea Sir James again thought that outright cession to the Crown would be the best way of settling the country's future, but he held up the negotiations once more by asking for the return of his money, and also for compensation for Charles. In the end however, in October 1866, he offered Sarawak to the British Government unconditionally, "giving up all thought of regaining his private fortune or securing his own family upon the throne." (Rajah Brooke & Baroness Burdett Coutts, p.282, Owen Rutter's commentary.) But it was again refused.

This brings us to the time when he had his second stroke, in October 1866 at Burrator. At the time of his seizure St. John, who had just left after a visit, returned at once, and Arthur Crookshank was also there. In the train St. John met Miss Coutts and Mrs. Brown, hurrying to take lodgings at Tavistock, apparently to keep an eye on happenings at Burrator. At this time Captain Brooke and his mother, Mrs. Johnson, and the Rajah's other sister, Mrs. Savage, travelled down to Devon. But St. John, aided by the doctor to whom he made strong representations*, was able to prevent not only the patient's nephew but also his two sisters from seeing

* See St. John's correspondence with Miss Coutts on pp.285-6-7 of Rajah Brooke & Baroness Burdett Coutts. A very illuminating sentence, dated 27 December, 1866, runs as follows: "Dr. Beith promised to come tomorrow, he behaved very well. I whispered in his ear - Be firm - but firm or not Sauls [the Rajah's man-servant] and I had taken our resolution."

him. A postscript to a letter written by St. John at the time to Miss Coutts runs:

"Stuart [the youngest Johnson son] actually found his mother and Captain Brooke in the train, coming to Horrbridge, and had much difficulty, in spite of Dr. Beith's opinion, in inducing them to give up the journey, but they sent Mrs. Savage. I suspect that finding the house in possession of a friend of the Rajah, they knew their schemes would fail."

Sir James lived for another eighteen months, but the story of those months makes sad reading. Miss Coutts now endeavoured to interest Italy in the future of Sarawak. She feared that on the Rajah's death Captain Brooke might go out and claim the succession. We have it from St. John (and perhaps in this case the statement can be taken at its face value,) that he himself thought there could have been little doubt as to the result should Captain Brooke have done this, and that he "would have been received by all, as the natives in general could not understand why he had ceased to be heir to the Rajah. As between the Rajah and his nephew there could

be no doubt, but between the two brothers there would be little question as to the result." (St. John, Life of Sir James Brooke, p.373.)

In connection with the proposal to Italy Miss Coutts turned her thoughts to the formation of a joint English and Italian Company. Writing on February 5, 1867, to her friend, Sir James Lacaita, who had contacts in the Italian Government, she puts this proposition forward, and says, amongst other things: "I think you would find many in England willing to help on such a Company..." And further on is another important sentence:

"I have dwelt more on this point than on any other, because I think the present Company may propose to sell their interest, and this might be a point which may have to be decided soon, and also because as regards a Company I can better speak, for as you know, the Rajah at present is quite ignorant of our communication..." (Rajah Brooke & Baroness Burdett Coutts, p.293.)

However, Italy declined to be interested in Sarawak, as had England, Holland, Belgium and France, and Miss Coutts and St. John reverted to a scheme for an Association financed with English capital, which also came to nothing. But I think it is in these various manoeuvres that we have the explanation of the, from Helms' points of view, perplexing behaviour of the Directors of the Borneo Company at this time. They must have felt that from one month to the next they never knew where they were, and no doubt also their counsels were divided.

Among Helms' papers was a photograph of Miss Coutts, with Mrs. Brown and a party of friends, taking tea in front of Holly Lodge. It is not dated, nor is there any indication as to who took it or why he came to have it, but he wrote in the names of all but one of the group, of whom John (later Sir John) Pope Hennessy is one. It may have had significance with regard to the financial intrigues. Pope Hennessy became Governor of Labuan in 1868, his appointment to

this post probably having had some obscure link with Miss Coutts' plans.*

* In The White Rajahs, (note to p.175,) Sir Steven Runciman says: "He [Pope Hennessy] had been acquainted with Rajah James and had even stayed at Burrator." James Pope Hennessy, grandson of John, writes in Verandah (p.53:) "By the autumn of 1867 Brooke, who had himself been Governor of Labuan, was dying, but Miss Burdett-Coutts arranged a series of meetings, both in London and at Brooke's cottage near Plymouth, between the moribund White Rajah and John Pope Hennessy."

Of the others I have only been able to find one mentioned by name in any source known to me, Mr. Wagner. In a letter from Sir James to Miss Coutts, dated August 10, 1867, he says:

"I have never seen a better letter than your letter to Lord Stanley which shall be sent as soon as one or two blanks are filled up which Mr. Wagner could not decypher." (Rajah Brooke & Baroness Burdett Coutts, p.298.)

So apparently Mr. Wagner was at Burrator at that time, helping Sir James with his correspondence.

Sir James made quite a good recovery from his second stroke, and again, early in 1867, Captain Brooke made a fruitless attempt to see him. To end an unhappy situation Bishop McDougall persuaded him to give up any hope of regaining his former position, and to give an undertaking not to interfere with his brother should he be confirmed as the Rajah's successor. This undertaking he gave and kept, though on account of his son it must have been very bitter to him to have to do so. And in April 1867 the Rajah re-made his will for the last time, and bequeathed the sovereignty of Sarawak to Charles Brooke and his heirs male, and in default of such issue to Stuart Johnson and his heirs. Should the line then fail he bequeathed the sovereignty to "Her Majesty the Queen of England, her heirs and assigns for ever." No mention was made of his great-nephew Hope. Miss Coutts, Mr. Abel Smith and Sir Thomas Fairbairn

were the executors of the Sovereignty of Sarawak clause. (Rajah Brooke & Baroness Burdett Coutts, p.308.)

On June 6 of the following year Sir James had a third stroke and died five days later. He is buried in the little churchyard of Sheepstor, near his home. "Many mourners were at the funeral," wrote Mr. Bunyon, "but of his former friends many were absent; some could not come and some were not invited." (McDougall Memoirs, p.278.)

In the last letter but one which he wrote to Miss Coutts, on May 12th, occurs this passage:

"I am sorry to hear the lamentable account of my nephew Brooke who continues much as usual, ill, very ill, yet not getting better or worse, and I am shocked at the grief of my sister who is terribly down-hearted." (Rajah Brooke & Baroness Burdett Coutts, p.304.)

Less than six months after the Rajah's death, on December 2nd, the following announcement appeared in The Times:

"On the 1st December, at Hounslow, John Brooke Johnson Brooke, formerly Captain of H.M's 88th Regiment, Raja Muda of Sarawak, eldest son of the Rev. Francis Charles Johnson of White Lackington, Somersetsire, aged 45."

Mr. Bunyon wrote that he died "broken-hearted, paralysed and with a clouded mind." (McDougall Memoirs, p.244.) And so ended a life dogged by remorseless fatality. His mother died less than eighteen months after him.

The Somerset village of White Lackington is still a village, though no longer isolated, as in the days when the old Rajah wrote his letter to Helms. Inside the little 15th century church is a memorial tablet, fixed so high on the wall that it might well escape the notice of the casual visitor:

"Sacred to the memory of
JOHN BROOKE JOHNSON BROOKE
Rajah Muda of Sarawak in the island of Borneo,

Formerly Captain in Her Majesty's 88th Regiment of Foot.

He died on the 1st day of December 1868,
in the 45th year of his age.

His body lies in a vault in this churchyard."

Below the inscription is the shield bearing the cross from the Brooke arms, but without its motto "Dum spiro, spero," for he, there commemorated, no longer breathed or had hope in this mortal world, and there is also written a verse from the 53rd Psalm:

"Verily there is a reward for the righteous,
Doubtless there is a God that judgeth the earth."

Outside in the churchyard with its ancient, yew-trees is the Johnson family vault, surmounted by a marble cross, on the lower plinth of which, at the side, are the words:

"John Brooke, died on the 1st day of December 1868,
aged 45 years."

The confusion which existed in the public mind as to the Sarawak affair is shown by the fact that on December 5th, three days after The Times had printed the announcement of Captain Brooke's death, it published a short obituary which was headed; "Death of the new Rajah of Sarawak." It began:

"It was only about six months ago or even less, that we announced in these columns the death of Sir James Brooke, the Rajah of Sarawak, and now it is our duty to record the death of his nephew, Captain Johnson Brooke, his successor in his Eastern Raj."

The obituary went on to give the correct facts of Captain Brooke's career, but then made the astonishing mistake of calling him the Tuan Muda and attributing to him the authorship of Charles Brooke's book Ten Years in Sarawak, which had been published two years previously. The final sentences, however, ran:

"Captain Johnson Brooke was twice married but has been twice left a widower. He is succeeded by the only surviving son, the issue of the first marriage with one of the Grants of Kilgraston, Perthshire."

Two days later again a letter appeared over the initials E.M.* which stated:

"The deceased gentleman, though closely connected at one time with the government of Sarawak had ceased to participate actively in it for some years. The late Sir James Brooke was succeeded by his nephew, the present Rajah, Charles Johnson Brooke..."

* Probably Mr. E. Martin, manager of Miss Coutts' Quop estate, who was acting as Vice-Consul at the time.

This confusion is perpetuated even to the present day by paragraphs in at least two modern guide-books,* both of which state, (though a careful reading of the inscription would have shown the compilers their mistake,) that there is a tablet in White Lackington church to the memory of "Sir James Brooke, Rajah of Sarawak."

* Somerset in the King's England series, edited by Arthur Mee, and Somerset in the County Guide series.

C.J.Bunyon wrote as follows:

"It is no duty on the part of the author to vindicate his [Captain Brooke's] memory further than to express his belief that he was both an unfortunate and in intention an honourable man. The statement of his case, fairly, not exhaustively, set out, will be found in Mr. Helms' book..." (McDougall Memoirs, p.244.)

In this book, which was published some seven years before Mr. Bunyon wrote in 1889, Helms, who after his return to England had had opportunity to go into aspects of the matter which had necessarily not been clear to him at the time, went as far as he could in expressing his personal opinion. Most of the evidence in Captain Brooke's favour as he stated it has been given in these pages, together with much which was either not available, or could not be published, in his day. He did his utmost to be fair to both uncle and nephew, and his final paragraph regarding both men runs as follows:

"Sir James Brooke's labours attracted the attention and sympathy of his countrymen because of the romantic circumstances which surrounded his first settlement in Borneo, his sympathy with

the suffering Dyak tribes, and the extraordinary influence he obtained over the natives of the country. As for Captain Brooke, those who knew him and witnessed his devotion to his duties, and the sorrows with which it pleased Providence to afflict him in his private life, will think of him as a martyr to whom Sarawak owes much, and whose lovable qualities are remembered by native and European alike."

In 1868, however, the publication of this book was still fourteen years ahead, and it was in those years that the process was started whereby the name of John Brooke Johnson has been obliterated as far as possible from Sarawak history.

Chapter Twenty-one

The New Dispensation

The year 1868 does not seem to have produced any events of special interest in Sarawak. Helms occupied himself, amongst other things, in making a map of the country; up to that time only a simple outline of the coast existed. Among his papers was a letter dated 20 January 1869, to Sir Roderick Murchison, the then President of the Royal Geographical Society, of which the opening sentence reads:

"Sir,

"The accompanying Chart of Sarawak was compiled by the writer while exploring the Country in search of Minerals, - and which, as no Map exists of the interior of this Settlement may not prove uninteresting to the Geographical society..."

He goes on to give such information as to the natural features and mineral wealth as he had been able to collect; and signs the letter as Manager of the Borneo Co. Ltd., in Sarawak. Helms used this map when he came to write his book, although by that time a somewhat fuller one had been produced which was made for Miss Jacob's book in 1876. No trace could be found of any acknowledgement to his letter, and on enquiry at the Society's Headquarters I was told that although they have a copy of his book there is no record of any such letter or map having been received there. But a copy of the map was in the Company's office in Kuching up to the Japanese occupation.

On May 2, 1869, he received a letter from London from Charles Brooke, now Rajah, which contained the following:

"I had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Henderson who called here with Harvey; I have arranged to-day that the agency in England is

again to be placed in the hands of the Borneo Co. Ltd., and Mr. Henderson has accepted."

So the way was clear for the new order of things and in October 1869 Rajah Charles married his cousin Margaret de Windt, and took her out to Sarawak, and life in Kuching became more usual. A new residence, Astana, (Sanskrit = Asthana, Palace,) was built for them, and formed a focus for the social life which Ranee Margaret described in her book Good Morning and Good Night. This was necessarily simple, limited to dinner and croquet parties and musical evenings, which the few resident families gave by turns. Mr. (now Bishop) Chambers, who had been appointed to succeed Bishop McDougall, returned with his wife from Europe in the same ship as the Rajah and Ranee, and the Ranee wrote that the party was met on arrival by Mr. and Mrs. Crookshank and Mr. and Mrs. Helms. In the course of her later narrative Ranee Margaret mentions Ann several times, usually as having been insistent in warnings and advice on the matter of having a baby in Sarawak, and the precautions which should be taken. One can understand that to such a young girl, (she was in her early twenties,) these counsels may have seemed unnecessary, and slightly depressing; Ann perhaps was over-anxious. But there can be no doubt that she was thinking of the graves of Annie Brooke and of Julia Brooke, which she could see from her garden at the water's edge on the opposite bank of the river, and that she feared lest history might repeat itself. At anyrate, as Ranee Margaret put it: "Never mind, she meant well!" And she certainly could speak with authority, since by that time her fifth daughter had been born, and the sixth was on the way.

It was just after the birth of this sixth child that the quarrel arose between Church and State which disturbed the social peace of Kuching for many months. Ranee Margaret gave a full and amusing account of it in her book. It was caused by a sermon

preached on some day in May 1870 by Bishop Chambers, in which he attacked the Rajah's officials and their ways in such terms that the Rajah, who was present, was infuriated, and wrote him a strongly-worded letter.

Bishop Chambers was a man of very different stamp from Bishop McDougall, much narrower and more uncompromising in outlook, as was shown a few years later when he refused to bury Raneë Margaret's stillborn child in consecrated ground because it had not been christened. (Good Morning and Good Night, p.130.) And his wife, (the former Miss Woolley of Chinese Insurrection days,) who was nicknamed "Mrs. Proudie" by the other ladies, seems to have fanned the flames of discord, and was always seeing imaginary slights to her husband. Helms, occupying a detached and neutral position, offered to try his hand at mediation, and preserved a couple of letters thanking him for his efforts. They give a good picture of the two men concerned.

The Bishop wrote:

"... At the same time I must add that my sermon contained as I believe the truth of God, and that therefore neither the fear nor the friendship of Man shall make me withdraw a word of it..."

And Rajah Charles, disclaiming any feeling of private animosity, wrote:

"... I can't alter my opinion in respect to the sermon... but my course is my own and I do not wish to bring blame on others. - Time, I suppose, will mollify remarks from the Pulpit as it does most other things, and as I am going for a time from Sarawak and have active duties to think of [he was about to leave for Sibu] the past may be forgotten on my return."

But from Raneë Margaret's book it seems as though the breach was not really healed for two or three years, not until the Crookshanks left Sarawak, since they in particular disliked 'Mrs. Proudie.' She summed it up thus: "Mrs. Chambers was not very

amiable, but why should Mrs. Crookshank have tried to keep the fire burning?..." (Good Morning and Good Night, p.64.)

During the remaining two years of his time in Sarawak the mine at Tegora occupied most of Helms' time and thought. Once the preliminary workings were complete there seemed to be nothing to prevent the early export of quicksilver in quantity:

"But the past should have warned me that in this new undertaking we should, as in former cases, have to pay for our experience. At the very outset some grave mistakes were committed... The samples of rich ore which had been sent home were the pure metal which would yield a very high percentage of quicksilver, they were from the outcrop of the ore-bearing rocks which by decomposition had been released from their matrix. By disposing of this ore untreated the greater part of the profit would pass to the smelters at home."

He protested against the instructions to send it back to England and the error was admitted later, but another mistake was made. The Directors had been advised that quicksilver could be released by the same method as that used in treating tin-ore, namely stamping and washing, and without ascertaining what was the latest process in use in mines in Europe and America they sent out Cornish miners who had no experience whatsoever to guide them with cinnabar. Unfortunately they also sent out machinery for the stamping and washing process, and this had been proved some years before in Austria, where one of Europe's biggest quicksilver mines was situated in Idria, (now in Jugoslavia,) to be unsatisfactory. It had been discovered that the best way of extracting quicksilver is by heat in furnaces, the old method leaving so much of the metal behind as to be very wasteful. But the whole matter was necessarily handled, like all the early discoveries, on a trial and error basis, and even so sales in China, where prices were high, made money. At the end of 1871 Helms was able to write in triumph that after repaying the entire outlay in plants of every kind, which had

been heavy, there was already a clear profit of nine thousand pounds. The tide had turned at last.

All this time Helms was still without any agreement with the Company other than the old one by which he was entitled to a third share in the branch undertaking. He was now the only man in Kuching outside the Government who had occupied a leading position during the events of 1863, and there may have been some influence at work which thought it would be advisable to force him out. If this was so the agreement would form a convenient pretext. Only by some such theory can one account for the Company's policy towards him at this time, a policy moreover which proved in the end to have been against its own best interests. Helms himself never criticised the actions of the Directors except in one or two letters to his wife when the situation was causing him much personal anxiety. On the contrary, he repeatedly defended them against charges such as St. John made in his book, of having been ungenerous in various measures which they took. As he pointed out more than once, the Company's whole position had been one of extreme difficulty ever since the Chinese Insurrection.

He determined, however, to ask for leave as soon as he got Tegora really going, in order to clarify his position, and in May 1871 his wife left once more for England, again taking with her four small children, the youngest a baby of a year old. The two eldest girls were by this time in Fraülein Fick's care at Ann's old school in Hildesheim, and reports on their health had not been very satisfactory; the North German climate proved trying to children born and reared almost on the Equator. So it was decided that Ann should go home in advance, and that her husband would follow as soon as possible.

The second series of letters to Ann begins on 7 May, 1871, just after she had sailed. They describe the progress of the work at the mine, and the emergence of the difficulties already referred to. They also give a good deal of social gossip regarding the amusements, the feuds, even on occasion the mild scandals of Kuching society. Some of this, though unimportant in itself, is quite entertaining when read in conjunction with Rane Margaret's narrative.

In the first letter he writes;
"... I do hope I shall have a pretty full account of you all from Penang... How hard it is that we can have no communication during the voyage, this letter will be following you, but never overtake you till the end of the journey, when the Children at least will be too preoccupied to think of Papa... After leaving you I landed at Pinding and walked up in a smart shower of rain and came home feeling wet and miserable. I must give Aloy [his Chinese boy] credit for having put the house nicely in order, - but this made it look still more empty... I don't know how I got through the evening... And so up the River I went the day after you left. It will still be a fortnight before the stamps are started, not longer I think, - and within a month we shall begin to smelt, when I hope we shall turn out say three to four hundred pounds of Quicksilver per day..."

"Sarawak, 26th May, 1871.

"... You may imagine what wretched suspense I was kept in till the Royalist at last brought me your letter... Poor Darling, your worst trouble, the Red Sea - will by this time have commenced - I pray to God you may get it over without too much suffering, and that a kindly wind will temper the destroying heat....

"Here things are going in the old jog - nothing new. I returned yesterday from Tegora, my second trip since you left. Still no start, the fact is they had under-estimated the amount of work to be done....

"The Rajah has gone up the Coast in the Royalist. I believe some of the Residents are coming down for the Doctor's wedding, Skelton* and Paul are not coming however, - they will require to look after their places, as the Govt. has sent the Dyaks out on their own hook, after the Katibas fellows. - It is not altogether satisfactory that they should go without a leading, but I suppose H.M. can't help himself.

* Mr. Skelton was in charge of Sibu fort. A year previously, in May 1870, there had been trouble with the Kanowit and Katibas Dyaks, who had attempted to capture it. They were sharply dealt with but were not yet pacified. After the expedition in 1871 most of them were moved to an area more easily controlled, further down the River Rajang. (Runciman, The White Rajahs, p.170.) Presumably Helms' reference to going without a leading meant lest they should succumb to the temptation of head-taking.

He and Mrs. Brooke have been very cordial. - I have dined with them twice, once quite alone - and this proved the pleasantest evening I have yet spent there.

"The Sri is just in, bringing me your letter from Galle..."*

* The Sri Sarawak was the latest of the Borneo Company's steamers. Helms described her as "a handsome boat which, though rather larger than was quite suitable for the coasting-trade, yet served me very well."

"As you say, the children must not come out again, - and I must come home to you as soon as possible, - in fact I suspect I shall give up California..."

This last sentence refers to the fact that Helms had suggested to the Directors that he should travel by way of California, in order to see the quicksilver mines there and the methods used to work them. They approved, and sent him letters of introduction, and he carried out the plan, but not for another year.

"Tonight the Doctor gives his bachelor party, - I am not going," the letter continues. There is no clue as to the identity of Dr. Houghton's bride, but it seems that the marriage was not considered a very satisfactory one by Kuching residents, in fact, in one letter Helms wrote: "She very likely will make the Doctor a fitting wife, but I never saw such a Bride, and could not suppress a feeling of loathing."

"... Last night Hardie and I dined with the Rajah and Mrs. Brooke, alone, they have taken my hint. We enjoyed ourselves very much, Mrs. Brooke playing all the evening... Mrs. Chambers is rather bothering me with invitations in a friendly way - I have one for tomorrow."

Everyone seems to have been most hospitable to the grass-widower, but social life, as such, was never much to Helms' taste,

and he had evidently asked if he might be invited to Astana when there was no party. He loved music, and Rane Margaret was a very accomplished pianist. She said in her book that Kuching residents did not seem to care much to hear her play, except for accompaniments to the songs sung by different members of the community, but this letter shows that she had at anyrate two very appreciative listeners.

In Europe the latest happening had been the proclamation of the Commune a couple of months previously, and the letter goes on:

"What a terrible state poor France is in. I think... that I could almost forgive the Prussians if they would go in and hang every red Republican in Paris... As for Denmark, I fear her fate is sealed, and if Scandinavia is to be divided between Germany and Russia then rather the former - but I know of one Dane who won't don the German colours.."

"Sarawak, 20th June, 1871.

"... The Royalist left this some five days ago for Bruni and Labuan, with the Rajah and Mrs. Brooke on board. Mrs. Brooke, who is in an interesting condition [twin boys were born to her early in 1872] did not look fit to go. - I saw her the night before and she looked pale and nervous - and when asked why she went said because the Rajah would like her to. So away they went and returned the fourth day with her very ill, she is better to-day... I hope it will be all right, and that this will be a warning to the Rajah that his Wife is not fit for such knocking about...

"I dislike dinner-parties more and more. I have just declined one to the Crookshanks tomorrow...."

"Sarawak, 7th July.

"... While at Tegora the other day I selected a place for a Bungalow for myself and other visitors, - it is a pretty spot, a hill overlooking the woods and country beyond, - with a fine cool stream foaming at its base where a fine bath will be made. I am not allowing them to cut down any of the old trees which will shade the place, except a vista here and there. When you come out again we will occasionally retire there. - I am going to take the Rajah and Mrs. Brooke and perhaps the Resident and Mrs. Crookshank up there when the House is finished. We are now building the last two bridges over the stream, and the road will then be complete and fit for riding from Busau to Tegora..."

Helms gave a drawing of this bungalow in his book. It seems to have pleased him immensely, and it is a good illustration of how tastes differ that Robert Henderson the Second, visiting Tegora three years later, wrote that he found the Company bungalow "substantial and good, but its position absurd, at the top of a hill." (The Borneo Story, p.57.) Probably the explanation is that the man born and bred in a country where the highest elevation is less than 500 ft.,* found the top of a hill an ideal situation for a house. It will be remembered that he chose a hill top for the site of his first little "box of palm-leaves."*

* Himmelbjerget, (heaven mountain) near Silkeborg in Jutland.

* It seems, however, that the Tegora bungalow was much appreciated at one period of its history. See note 5 in Appendix, by Mr. T.C. Martine.

The letter of July 7th goes on:

"And now for a little gossip. Marriage has not fattened the Doctor, he looks as thin as a Herring - and rather unhappy. I doubt very much that it will turn out a happy union. The Kemps had their Baby christened the other day - everybody went to tea and cake,* I was up country and called the following day.

* Mr. Kemp was Bishop's Chaplain.

"Mrs. Brooke's illness caused by the sea-voyage turned out to be nothing, she never looked better, - and they are off to Simungang tomorrow morning. Mrs. Brooke's youngest brother is coming out.*

* Harry de Windt.

"I saw the Baby the other night... It is getting a fine little thing.*

* This refers to Ranee Margaret's first child, little Ghita, who was born in September 1870, and died so tragically with her twin brothers on the voyage home to England three years later.

"Sarawak, 25th July, 1871.

"... Two days ago I recd your letter from off Gibraltar...I will not keep away longer than I can help, - tho' I fear it won't be till spring, I must get out a lot of Quicksilver and have the Muka Sago Mill fairly working before I can go. However, early spring I will come with the Buttercups and Daiseys. - Our account just out from home shows £9000 as clear profit on Quicksilver - after paying all our great outlay... and leaving some hundred flasks to China

which are sold to arrive at high prices, - and now our stamps are fairly at work I hope to keep it up... I have just sent Philips to Muka with the needful to put up the Mill again. - Harvey at the last moment wrote he thought it was not worth going on with. As action could not be delayed I either had to give up Muka or go on, on my own responsibility, - which is what they want..."

Exactly what had happened to the Muka mill is not clear, but it was successfully started again. Rane Margaret gave a full account of it and of the processes by which sago is refined, including the horrible smell given off by the crushed pith of the palm in the first stage, which one supposes not even the latest advances in manufacturing processes have been able to get rid of entirely.

The next letter, dated August 5th, comments upon one which Helms had received from his wife, evidently describing an interview which she had had with someone connected with the Company:

"... Thanks, my Darling, for the gallant way in which you fought our battles... As you truly say, when not absolutely necessary it is useless to remonstrate. - I am more anxious as to what you say about their being jealous of my terms - for to the Cinnabar alone can we look. - God grant that the ore may turn out to be of average good quality when we come to work it in quantity. - I don't think, however, they will find it so easy to get rid of me, owing to my third partnership in the property.

"The Rajah is away after the Katibas Dyaks again, but is expected to-day. Meanwhile the warship, on board of which there are fifteen officers, has given rise to the usual round of dinners. I had one of eight last night... There was a picnic yesterday, given by the officers... Crookshank, Mrs. Brooke and myself were the only ones that did not go. - I called on Mrs. Brooke in the afternoon to cheer her up, - she was very fidgety about the Rajah... and I got her to go across the River with me, when she drove her ponies and I rode...."

"Sarawak, 9th August, 1871.

"... The Royalist came back yesterday with the Rajah from Redjang... he had a successful expedition - I hope he may not have to repeat it. The Rajah gives a great Dinner-party to-night to which Crichton and myself are to go..."

"Sarawak, 11th August, 1871.

"... The Nassau has only this moment left, having been here nearly a fortnight. - They got something the matter with the screw - and had to put the stern high and dry on the stony point close to our office. The Rajah and Mrs. Brooke went onboard yesterday, when there was manning of yards and salute firing, - to the confusion of the office ceiling - and I am delighted they are away.

"I told you Crichton and I dined at Govt. House, we sat down 16, and the following night they had a similar number, we were amongst the swells I think, - and Crichton was much amused to notice that several people called during the day to find out for which night we were asked.... The naval officers gave us some wonderful songs, very sentimental - and it was not altogether without reason that Mrs. Brooke said she was getting rather alarmed when the Captain, a somewhat elderly Sweet William - gave vent to his feelings in Song, - he was an insufferable and irrepressible singer, and would not take the Rajah's hint that he was quite entitled to call on the Ladies to sing.

"I have not kept up the Saturday Croquet - not wanting to go to other peoples' gatherings. - Mrs. Chambers and her niece tell me however that they mean to come tomorrow. The gardeners keep the place in very good order - I can't say that I have done anything for it myself, - I don't think I have planted anything since you left.

"PS. The illus. London News... gave us the portrait of the claimant in the Tichborne Case. - What a marvellous case - I can't at all make up my mind - I think he must be the real man...."

"Sarawak, 22nd August, 1871.

"... Your letter of 12th July is to hand, and alas, a telegram was received by the same mail telling of Mr. Henderson's death.*

* At this date it was still necessary for telegrams to be forwarded from Singapore by sea.

"I feel this very deeply, - having, as you know, always looked forward with pleasure to meeting him. - Half the satisfaction of presenting myself in Mincing Lane after bringing this branch to a satisfactory status (should I succeed in this,) will have gone. - He was a kindly as well as a good business man, and in him we have lost our best friend in the B.C.L. - I read your account of your visit to Randalls Park with sad interest, - what a dreadful blow for poor Mrs. Henderson and the children.

"Sarawak, 1st September, 1871.

"... Since writing the foregoing I have been away in the Sri to Muka and Bintulu... Hardie looked very well and the Mill should be

in working order in a month's time, and I think there is every chance of at last getting a season's fair work out of it. - If this is accomplished and the Quicksilver coming out freely I shall be able in spring to start on my home voyage with satisfaction. Tegora... is our sheet and anchor. But the works are taking longer to complete than I anticipated, - the stamps have long been at work, but we can't get the metal separated from the slimy mud into which they pound the ore till the washing apparatus and doors are complete. The man who looks after this, (John Lanyon,) ought to have been out six months sooner...

"When I was at Tegora the other day... we had a hideous accident - a rock which four Chinese were working under on the top of the mountain suddenly gave way - killing three and wounding the fourth. We were there at the time, it was a sickening sight. Strange to say the men did not make much of it - Chinamen don't value human life much."

Elsewhere Helms gave another illustration of the indifference with which the Chinese workers reacted to injuries or illness. In the final stages of the quicksilver extraction they became liable to salivation from the mercuric fumes, an affection which loosens the teeth in the gums. One day he was told that a Chinese wanted to see him, and when he enquired the reason he was told: "Oh, he's got all his teeth in a piece of paper." But he did not seem to mind much and a gift of money made him quite happy.

"Sarawak, 2nd September, 1871.

"... I dined last night with the residents, [Mr. and Mrs. Crookshank.] Skelton and the Parkers were there. - He (Skelton)... told me a good deal about the arrangements at Govt. House - he says the monthly expenses are \$1700, is it not too bad? and this when they cannot pay us [the Borneo Co.] who they owe \$23000. Then the Rajah's appointments are most foolish and unjust. - An adventurer (Irenis) a bankrupt Merchant from Hangkow - comes over... and ends by being appointed an Asst. Resident at Siboo with \$125 per month, nearly as much as Skelton [the Resident] gets..."*

* Ranee Margaret wrote of Harry Skelton: "He was very tall and fair with charming blue eyes, and thank goodness! - he could talk." Rajah Charles, however, said: "Skelton always talks too much."
(Good Morning and Good Night, pp. 77 & 79.)

"Next day.

"We had a very pleasant evening at the Bishops' last night. Mrs. Chambers does not look well - she is always fretting. - Kemp has a leader in the Sarawak Gazette of 21 August insulting to the Bishop she says, who is going to speak to the Rajah about it. So I suppose we shall have a row..."

No row seems to have materialised at that time, but there was a truly dreadful one between the Bishop and his chaplain in the following April, in which Helms, just before his departure, once more endeavoured to act as mediator. The cause of the dispute is not recorded, nor its outcome.

At home Ann seems to have had some idea of taking a house in Hildesheim for the time, in order that all the children might go to school there, but this came to nothing. She went over to Germany, brought the two eldest girls back with her, and once again took a house at Highgate. Helms goes on to tell her of the suggestions that he had made to the Directors for the management of the branch during his absence:

"I have had a fear that they might take advantage of my going home to put someone in that I don't want. - If so, I mean to set my face against it, but we shall see. Meanwhile they will have had my letter saying I don't want to go till spring. - These confounded washing-floors are delaying us dreadfully at Tegora, the stamps have been no use as we could not wash the stuff they pounded..."

"We are daily expecting the Gunboat Teazer with Mr. Bulwer, the new Governor of Labuan. The Rajah has invited him here and I hope they will manage to get into better relations with him than they were with Hennessy - and that he may hope to improve their relations with Bruni, which are very unsatisfactory..."

Pope Hennessy, during his three years as Governor of Labuan was always at loggerheads with Sarawak, upholding the authority of the Sultan of Brunei without endeavouring to influence him by advice, as he might have done. Mr. Bulwer's policy does not seem to have been much better, and relations between Labuan and Sarawak only began to improve when Mr. H.T. Ussher became Governor in 1875.

Helms' letter continues:

"Gangs of Malays who were collecting produce for Hardie in Bruni territory near Bintulu, have been sent back, - most annoying, as we would undoubtedly have made good trade there... The fact is, I don't consider that the Rajah is pursuing a prudent or justifiable policy in intriguing to get possession of the Barram River. It is quite true that the Sultan's Govt. is bad, - but it does not follow that this justifies him in taking it. - I hear they are now building a fort at Barram, which does not look as if they intended to give up the game. I wrote to the Rajah the other day complaining of our trade being stopped, to which I had a long answer saying that he had in vain remonstrated with the Sultan, who was acting contrary to the treaty between the two Countries. - He added that he would like to go up to Baram in the Heartsease on a friendly visit, and wanted to know whether I would accompany him in the Sri, - he added 'of course to look after trade.' It occurs to me that if the Sarawak Govt. can't get us permission to trade in Bruni Territory, - we may ourselves try what we can do with the Sultan, and I should therefore not like to place myself in a wrong position by assisting to invade (as it were) the Sultan's Territory. - I therefore answered the Rajah that as matters stand I did not think there would be much trade for the Sri at Barram, tho' if he wished I would go up that river at the same time that he went.* But I added that in my opinion if the Sultan had broken the treaty, the proper way to bring him to book would be by stopping payment of the Royalty. - I believe he has given up the expedition..."

* The Baram Territory was not finally ceded to Sarawak until 1882.

"Sarawak, 26 Septbr, 1871.

"... The Teazer has just left with Mr. Bulwer, there have been gay doings while they were here, most of which I avoided by going to Muka in the Sri. I went away the day before a great dinner (they sat down 28,) was to be given at the Rajah's, printed cards from the 'Rajah and Ranees' having been issued. - I returned compliments to 'Their Highnesses' excusing myself, upon which I got a note from Mrs. B. asking me to join them at dinner that night, which I did. I returned from Muka yesterday morning, finding the Teazer still here - and had to go and eat a bad breakfast at the Bishops' who have got the Captain staying with them, (he is some relation of the late Bishop Bloomfield which is also his name,) Last night there were Theatricals and a Supper on board, I went to the former but sneaked away when the latter came off. Of course Their Highnesses, His Excellency, and my Lord Bishop and Lady had prominent places. H.E. cornered me for a confab., he regretted very much not being able to go to the mines of which he had heard so much, and asked my opinion as to the Labuan Coal Mines. He amused me by saying that he had

been at the Company's office in Singapore and was rather surprised to find that there - as in other offices in the same place - the gentlemen sat at their desks in their shirt-sleeves. - I hope the man may turn out to be an improvement on Hennessy - the latter is still terrorising at Labuan - he has just suspended Low, [the Chief Secretary who was his father-in-law.] It is believed, however, that he may have gone too far in this, having done it after he had virtually ceased to be Governor.

The Rajah is going to the Coast in the Heartsease for 10 or 12 days - and Mrs. B. says she is going with him. I strongly advised her not - I had some rough seas, and Oya, Muka and Bintulu are nasty Rivers to enter."

Ranee Margaret went however, and gave a lively and amusing account for the trip in Good Morning and Good Night.

"Sarawak, 2nd October, 1871.

"... I have your letter of 24th August, - the usual sweet loving letter, the sort of letter that makes me wish that I could take a passage by electric telegraph to join you. - Alas, alas, - we have as yet too much of the Earth about us to get through space in so aerial a manner, and so I will write as becomes a Mortal who, I fear, is increasing in weight, - not alarmingly so however.

"I have had bad news from Tegora to-day, and tho' I have begun this letter jauntily I yet write greatly depressed. Here is the part of Fenwick's note to which I refer... 'I will do what I can to get you another shipment of Quicksilver for the next trip of the Sri, but Lanyon has a difficulty in treating this very fine ore. - Until you have paid us a visit here it would be prudent not to order any more stamps from England, the matter requires consideration in my opinion.' This is all Fenwick says on a subject which is almost life or death to me, for if the system we have adopted for reducing this ore does not answer the loss will be enormous..."

"Sarawak, 10th October, 1871.

"... I have been several days at Tegora. I think Fenwick frightened me without cause - there may be a little of the finest ore, the 'tailing' as they call it, escaping us just now, but this is entirely due to our floors, reservoirs for catching the ore being still incomplete. I am taking measures to prevent anything flowing away meanwhile, and Lanyon (in charge of this department) has no doubt that all the Metal will be extracted when we are complete..."

Here the book ends. It was full and its successor has not survived. There is, however, one further letter written three

months later which is of some interest, as it contains a vivid account of a tragic happening which added to Tegora difficulties.

"Sarawak, Jan. 2nd, 1872.

"... I fully expected to write a letter of unmixed cheerfulness, for on my last visit to Tegora I made up my mind that things there were going as well as possible, - and that with the beginning of the new year a smooth course of prosperity was to set in. Vain delusion. Our mechanical appliances were beginning to do their work, - but sickness and death suddenly came upon us, and deprived me of the Minds and Hands which were to use them. In short, John Lanyon, the constructor of our washing floors, the man upon whose work I have hung with anxious solicitude during the last ten months, is dead, - drowned in the River. His brother, the only man who could partially replace him, is lying ill at our house."

He goes on to explain that of the six Europeans at Tegora, John Lanyon was the most important, as he had been for several years in the employ of the man who had patented the machinery they were using, and had a complete scheme of working prepared:

"In fact, Lanyon had had such varied training in the treatment of different kinds of ore that the Company will find it difficult to get an equally useful man - not to speak of his other good qualities which were all that could be desired... But to come to my sad tale of the poor man's death..."

Lanyon's brother was ill in hospital in Kuching and Lanyon was coming down to visit him. As Christmas was approaching Helms determined to ask all the Company's European staff to a dinner, to which he also invited the Rajah and his officers and the Bishop and his clergy, there were to be twenty-four guests in all:

"On Saturday afternoon, about six o'clock, I was sitting with our men at the house when Lanyon and Wallace arrived from Tegora, they had in passing the Sri which was lying at the bazaar wharf, left their things onboard... Lanyon went to the Hospital to see his Brother with whom he remained till half-past-nine. The night was very dark and stormy, with torrents of rain. In passing from the Hospital to his lodging Lanyon... went on board the Sri to fetch his things. Having got them he took a lamp and stepped over the Steamer's side and onto the jetty. Blinded by rain and wind and probably still more by the light he carried, he walked over the side and fell with a shriek into the River. The man on watch gave the alarm and a boat was so quickly got ready that his clothes were

picked up near the spot where he fell in, but the River was swollen and rappid and he appears never to have risen, and sad to say we have not been able to find the body.

"It was a sad night for us who had gathered for the festive Season. Having taken measures to prevent the news reaching the brother that night I tried to sleep, but got little of it, having my melancholy errand in the morning before me. When at dawn I went to the Hospital, wind and rain were still in unabated fury, the Bazaar was under water, and there was the sick man who only a few hours ago had parted from his Brother and was utterly unconscious of what was coming. It was a stunning blow and perhaps its severity prevented that outburst of feeling which I had anticipated, for I knew that the Brothers were much attached to each other. I took him back to my house and there he now is, and as was to be expected, in a worse condition... And so you see that 71 ended melancholy for us, but we must look ahead and not weight ourselves with unavailing regrets...."

"6th January.

"... James Lanyon is improving and is, I believe, quite out of danger, he has indeed been nursed with the most anxious care. The rain has been so heavy, and the River so rappid that it was only yesterday our people could return up-country. Misfortunes have so crowded in upon me in the last few days that I am beginning to feel superstitious, and to expect Job's tiding from up-country in shape of destruction by floods of Furnaces, Bridges, Roads, etc., but I have had reassuring news, though I have no news yet of my grand Bridge across the Staat, 70 feet without a support and quite 40 feet above the stream.

"I have had time to collect my thoughts and after carefully surveying the situation I have come to the conclusion that if our friends at home lose no time in sending what we have asked for in the way of machinery, and also a man to replace Lanyon, we should be in full working order by the end of April. If I am to come home this year by way of California I must not be later, and I hardly feel courage to put it off another year. And so I have written to Brodie (who will take charge while I am away,) to come down from Shanghai next month.*

* W.G. Brodie succeeded Helms as manager of the Sarawak branch of the Borneo Company.

"The great dinner which I meditated did, of course, not come off, but I was liberally hospitable to our men. The Rajah, however, took up my idea of a dinner at which all the Europeans should be present, and though I rather demurred, he seemed to have fixed upon it, - and it came off very successfully two night ago. We sat down

twenty-two, of which eight belonged to the B.C.L. The Rajah asked me to propose his health which gave him an opportunity of delivering a long and rather successful speech. Great cordiality prevailed, but very quiet as befitted the circumstances..."

This is the last letter. We now know that in reality the death of poor John Lanyon which appeared such a blow at the time, could not in the end have made much difference to the mine, since the system itself was wrong from the beginning.

Part Four - The Later Years, 1872 - 1918

"We spend our years as a tale that is told."

Psalm XC, v. 9.

Chapter Twenty-two

Home and a Lawsuit

Helms left Sarawak on the 30 May, 1872, to return to Europe by way of Saigon, Hongkong, Shanghai, Japan and the United States.

Of Saigon he wrote that it was twenty years since he had last seen the waters of the Mekong, when on his visit to Cambodia he had listened to the King's pathetic tale of his country's misfortunes. "He had then looked rather to the Union Jack than to the Tricolor for protection, but France was now mistress here." And with regard to Hongkong and Shanghai which he had last seen as thriving settlements and which were now big cities, he made the following observation:

"These outposts of the white man's civilisation, planted on the coast of China, seemed to me one of the most significant and portentous signs of this progressive age. It points to great changes in the history and development of the long slumbering East; it shows what may be expected when the enterprise and science of the West shall have leavened the Celestial Empire."

Four days steaming took him to Nagasaki. At the time he published his book the descriptions he gave of Japan and its people were fresh to most readers, since it was less than ten years since that country had opened her gates to foreigners. But since then many hundreds of books have been written on the subject, and his impressions of mountains and islands, temples and tea-houses, lovely gardens and superb trees, are of little interest today.

Apart from the natural beauty of the country the two things which impressed him most were the goodwill and courtesy of the people, and the rage which had taken possession of them for adopting European life and customs. When on August 8th he embarked

on the Pacific Company's mail steamer Alaska for California, he had several Chinese and Japanese fellow-passengers. The conversation turned on the Japanese people and the speed with which they were embracing Western knowledge. Helms asked one of the Chinese, a clever, well-informed man who had been educated in America, whether his countrymen would imitate them. "Ah," was the answer, "they go much too fast... we shall move, but more slowly and surely, and trust more to ourselves."

The Alaska being what Helms described as a "huge ship" of nearly 5000 tons, the voyage took him only 23 days, unlike the two crossings of the Pacific which he had made in 1850, which had taken him 50 and 67 days respectively. But, accustomed to sail, he reflected that if the "great beam-engines" had broken down in mid-ocean, two thousand miles from either shore, they would have been helpless, for during the entire voyage they saw only one ship, the America of the same company. The boats were timed to meet in Mid Pacific for the exchange of mails, and "so correct had been our course that but for good outlook we might have collided." The ill-fated America was burnt a short time later, but luckily while in harbour in Japan.

San Francisco in 1872 amazed him:

"Vainly did I endeavour to define the landmarks of former days. Instead of the shanty in Montgomery Street where I had slept on a rough floor amidst rats and fleas, I was now lodged in the Occidental Hotel where two hundred bedrooms were fitted with luxury and comfort."

He looked for Flagstaff Hill from which he had sketched the town. It was gone, long ago levelled to the ground. The old mission of Dolores with its church was still there, but well within the city boundaries. And the streets which he had last seen deep in sand and mud and fringed with every kind of temporary structure, were now lined with big, indeed palatial buildings. On the water-

front sites, which had been offered him for a few dollars, now stood the principal part of the city. And he had a letter of introduction to one of San Francisco's wealthiest citizens, who as a struggling newspaper correspondent had been a member of the party which had roughed it in Montgomery Street twenty-two years earlier.

He fulfilled the purpose of his journey by visiting several of the Californian quicksilver mines, and also the celebrated silver mine of Comstock in Nevada, an expedition which produced an unforgettable experience. To reach the mine it was necessary to complete the journey by coach, and he left the train at midnight, together with two Americans bound for the same destination. They asked him whether he had his revolver, which rather surprised him after the settled condition he had seen elsewhere. But when he saw the other passengers he understood. For they were toughs of the worst kind and immediately possessed themselves of the rugs the three travellers had brought with them. They then refused to allow them inside seats and they had to mount to the coach roof where, perched on their luggage, they spent a frightful night rattling along over a stony mountain track, arriving numbed and shaken at their destination next morning. Even so they got off lightly, for making the return journey by daylight a short time later, they saw that the coach was full of bullet-holes.

Helms then broke his journey in Utah, to see for himself what he described as "the wonderful pioneering work" done at Salt Lake City by the Mormon sect, the centre of much controversy at that time, since polygamy was still practised. He had an interview with Brigham Young who invited him to join them, and did him the compliment of praising Scandinavian women: "... but," he wrote, "I must say that the appearance of those seen did not seem to indicate that the peculiar institution had brought them much happiness."

Then home, via New York, to Ann and the family at their Highgate home. And now, though Helms stated that he had a cordial reception from the Directors on his arrival, the difficulties which had threatened came to a head. They were apparently ready to negotiate a new agreement, but there was uncertainty about the sum due to him under his old one of a third share, which owing to Tegora had increased considerably. He himself stated the matter thus:

"A new agreement was to be arranged, but on both sides it was realised that it must be preceded by a settlement of the past, and here a difficulty arose which eventually had to be settled in the Law Courts."

It was four years before, in July 1876, the writ of summons was issued "to have an account taken of the partnership dealings between the plaintiff and the Defendant Company under the said Agreement and Deed respectively," etc., etc., "and to have the affairs of the Partnership wound up, and for an Injunction and Receiver." In December of that year, the suit was heard in London and was given in Helms' favour, the Judge ordering that the Sarawak branch of the Company should be liquidated, if necessary, to pay him. Matters went as far as the making of an inventory of the Company's Sarawak assets, but the Directors then decided to settle the matter out of Court. It would be tedious, as well as unnecessary, to go into the intricacies of this happening. But it does seem clear, on examination of such evidence as remains, that once more there were divided counsels on the Board, especially since Mr. Henderson's death, ("in him we have lost our best friend in the Company" Helms had written to his wife in August 1871.) He said that the Company afterwards made him an offer to return to Sarawak, but whether this was ever official I do not know. In any case the sum he was awarded was sufficiently substantial to enable him to retire, and since he had been so many years in the East he

decided to do so. But he remained on friendly terms with at anyrate some of the Directors, and for a good many years thereafter he attended the Annual General Meetings. In fact, the whole business seems to have been another example of the curious happenings which bedevilled his affairs from 1863 onwards.

So ended Helms' official connection with the Borneo Company Limited. In the end, as we know, the Company at last reaped the reward of its perseverance in the face of so many difficulties, and became an important feature of life not only in Sarawak, but in Siam, Singapore and elsewhere, and is today justifiably proud of its achievements.*

* This seems a fitting place at which to quote a sentence from Rane Margaret's first book. She wrote: "We have had recent and ample opportunities to judge of the dangers which half-civilised nations run at the hands of exploiting commercialism. What Sarawak should hitherto have escaped such dangers is infinitely to the honour of the Borneo Company Ltd., who have never sought to enrich themselves to the detriment of Sarawak people."

(My Life in Sarawak, p.312, published in 1913.)

A couple of months after the settlement of the lawsuit Helms received what he called: "this pleasing invitation from the Sarawak traders, Chinese and Indian." It ran as follows:

"Kuching, Sarawak,
27th February, 1877.

"L.V. Helms, Esqre,
London.

"Sir,

"We as per enclosed list being thirty three merchants of Sarawak, comprising three races of Chinese, viz. Taychew, Holl Kien, & Macao, and one of Tembies [Indian] send our greetings to you and our congratulations on the settlement of your bechara (lawsuit) with the Borneo Coy Limited.

"We all wish you to come to Sarawak in order that we may trade with you again. We all promise to give you our heartiest support.

"Gambier will be exported in eight months from this date. The pisang [banana] fibre is at present a monopoly of Ghee Soon & Co.,

they would throw this into your hands. The fibre can be got at the rate of about a thousand piculs a month.

"Gutta is being exported in large quantities, and Sago flour might be exported direct. If you decide to form a company, Kenwat will be happy to invest his money in it.

"Praying you to take the aforesaid proposition into your best consideration.

"We are, Sir,

"Your obedient servants,

Kenwat,

for self and others."

Kenwat's signature is appended in European as well as in Chinese characters, and there follow the thirty-three trade seals, stamped in either red or black, and with the European equivalent of the name written next to each.

It had taken four years to bring the lawsuit to a head, and up to that time it seems to have been an understood thing that Helms would return to Sarawak. One letter from Rajah Charles, dated 6 October, 1872, contains the following passage:

"Mr. Martin has resigned his appointment as Vice Consul - and if you receive the appointment at the F.O. I shall be glad to give you the necessary power. Lord Enfield is the man to sound in the matter."

The letter goes on:

"You will be much disappointed at the outturn of the quicksilver, which is not found in such satisfactory quantities as was expected, - there is little doubt that it is in many places in abundance...."

In 1875 Helms removed his family to Lausanne, where they remained for two years, until the lawsuit was actually settled. This was partly, I think, because living was cheap in Switzerland at that time, and also it was thought a good opportunity for the children to learn French.

Helms himself had to spend much of those two years in London, where Paul Tidman was helping him in his approach to the Courts. He described those months of uncertainty as having been harassing in the extreme.

Rajah Charles and Raneë Margaret, returning to Sarawak in May 1875, seem to have had some idea of travelling via Lausanne on their overland journey to Marseilles, for a letter from the Rajah says that their courier had informed them that the detour would add much to the length of the journey, since no express train would be available to make the connection from Lausanne onwards:

"... So we have to give up the thought and the pleasure of seeing your wife and family, and also that beautiful bit of country, and must go by the old ordinary route... We hope to see you out shortly, you will see some changes in Sarawak I fancy..."

Helms however, after winning his lawsuit, kept to his decision to retire, and for the next few years all went well. Before returning to England the family spent another two years abroad, this time at Boulogne, and it was from there that Helms, tired of inaction, went off on another expedition. Like his trip to California some thirty years earlier, it was totally unconnected with anything that had gone before, or anything that was to come after, and it entailed an almost startling change in scene and climate, since it was to investigate some abandoned lead, silver and copper mines, in Russian Lapland. As in California Helms had a glimpse of the building up of one of the two giants of today, the U.S.A., so through this adventure he had a glimpse of the crumbling structure of Imperial Russia, which was to be swept away some forty years later to make way for the building up of the other, the U.S.S.R.

The mines had originally been opened up in the reign of the Empress Anna* in about 1732, by Saxon miners under the direction of

* The Empress Anna, Dowager Duchess of Courland, was a niece of Peter the Great. She was instrumental in bringing many Germans to Russia in various capacities.

one Baron von Schonberg, a court favourite. The men had been sent by the Saxon government of the time in response to a request by

Russia for practical men to help develop the mineral resources of the Empire. Old German manuscripts in Russian archives preserved the records of these operations very minutely, even down to plans of the workings, and short expeditions had been sent north no less than three times in the eighteen sixties, to make sure that they really existed. Helms and some friends, after looking into the matter, thought the scheme had possibilities, combined with a touch of romance, the more so as work was said to have ceased on account of the fall from favour of the Baron, and not through exhaustion of the mineral deposits. It was the kind of plan which Helms found irresistible, and the practical side of the expedition was placed in his hands.

Later he devoted a whole chapter of his book to an account of it, and gave interesting descriptions of visits to Archangel, of the White Sea, and of the Kola peninsula, virtually unknown at that time, except to its few Russian and Lapp inhabitants, and to the handful of Russian government officials who administered it. He also told of the various difficulties which the expedition encountered during the four months which were all the short northern summer allowed for exploration. The mines were found, but fairly extensive operations brought no fresh mineral riches to light, and sadly they were compelled to admit failure. No doubt a good deal of money was lost over the venture. But had he been asked he most likely would have said that to him, at anyrate, it had been worth it. For that was what he always felt about an adventure, and I fancy that Ann was sorely tried at times by her husband's seemingly inexhaustible energy!

Chapter Twenty-three

Helms writes his Book

The White Sea adventure over Helms collected Ann and the children from Boulogne, and they took a house at Thornton Heath. This house, The Grove, (now demolished,) was loved by them all, and such of the children as were old enough remembered it with affection all their lives. It was in the years that they spent there that the second son and last child was born, and it was from there that Dora, the second daughter, married, the ceremony being performed by Bishop McDougall, then a Canon of Winchester Cathedral.* From there also Helms journeyed to Denmark to see his mother for the last time before she died at the age of ninety-six, and during that visit he met old Doctor Gyntelberg once more. His Sofie was dead, and he lived alone with only some of his pigeons for company.

* Bishop McDougall died in November 1886. His wife died six months earlier.

And it was at The Grove that Helms wrote his book, published in 1882. I have already quoted from it extensively since many of his journals were incorporated in it, and in particular I have dealt with most of the controversial material on the Brooke quarrel, the publication of which was to have such an unfortunate effect on his later life. But there is one further paragraph which deserves a place, for it shows how deeply he felt what he had seen as a grievous injustice to a man for whom he had a high personal regard.

It occurs in the Preface, and is as follows:

"As to another subject I may seem to awaken slumbering controversy and challenge hostile opinion. The reference to the

dispute between two men, both of whom I knew and admired, - Rajah Brooke and his nephew Captain Brooke, - will be uninteresting to many and displeasing to some. But there are also those who will remember, and who will see that I have attempted, though somewhat late, to do an act of justice. As one who shared the intimacy of Rajah Brooke, I hold that his whole life will stand out as great and heroic, and such a man can bear the imputation of errors of judgement, and will not need to have his faults shielded. It has been my object, while doing full justice to Sir James Brooke, to deal fairly also with the memory of his gallant nephew, who no less devoted his life and sacrificed his fortunes to the cause of civilising Borneo."

Helms would, I think, have been much surprised if he had been told at the time that, far from his defence of Captain Brooke having come "somewhat late", it was getting on for a hundred years too early!

Of the many letters which he received after the appearance of Pioneering that from Charles Grant, from which I have already quoted twice, is the most important. It was a very long letter and there are two further passages which must be recorded. The first one runs as follows:

"You will be wishing to have my opinion on your remarks on the quarrel between the Rajah and Brooke. This was the first chapter I took up, and I read it over carefully a second time before I came to the conclusion I did, viz: that it is an exceedingly fair and impartial account of that most unfortunate incident. It does full justice to both in a kindly manner, while by quoting the actual evidence on either side it bears on its face the stamp of truth, which St. John's account does not. I thank you as one of the oldest and most confidential friends of both Rajah and Rajah Muda for this act of justice you have done them, but more especially for what you say in regard to the latter, who hitherto has been grossly misrepresented."

The second passage consists of a rather delightful little verse. It reads:

"Had the Rajah but met the gallant Burdet
in the gallant Burdet's own way,
There were ne'er a Bartlett* to wed in a pet
nor ever a shilling to pay.+

+of debt.

* Miss Coutts was made a Baroness in 1871, and in 1881, at the age of sixty-six, married her much younger secretary, Mr. Ashmead Bartlett, who then took her name.

"But then t'would be seen Burdet would be Queen,
(for Burdets could never be small,)
While poor Brooke+ would be sent with bed and with tent,
And sweet compliment to the wall.

+ Capt. B.

"extracted from the archives of 'the Society for the total suppression of meter!'"

Another letter, dated February 7, 1882, was from Sir William Adamson. He did not concern himself with the dynastic question, but with a different aspect of the book, and an extract is as follows:

"I hope that when you come to a second edition you will amplify the chapter on the Chinese question. Few men have had your experience, and I am persuaded that your views would command attention.

"People in England do not understand what sort of a place the Chinese nation will occupy when it begins to feel itself more on the solid footing of official equality with European nations. They do not see the difficulties wh. will arise when the big swarms of its immense hive will claim and receive the protection of the parent government. Think of a Chinese Consul General in Singapore in direct communication with his government and taking the part of his countrymen in the different quarrels which will arise. All this you could have set forth and I hope will yet do so."

But there was to be no second edition, although the press criticisms were very favourable, and several of them specifically drew attention to Helms' knowledge of and comments on, the Chinese question. The British Mail, of 1 April, 1882, in particular, summarised it as follows:

"It is Mr. Helms' opinion that the three races which are destined to rule the Eastern world are the Mongolian, the Muscovite, and the Anglo-Saxon."

His long experience of the East however made him believe that of the three it was the Chinese who would ultimately exercise the

greatest influence upon events and developments, and elsewhere he elaborated this theme:

"With little sympathy for a foreign policy of territorial abandonment as a rule, I yet hold that the ever-increasing dominions gathering under the British flag involve a responsibility from which English statesmen may well shrink...

"The increasing power of the Mongolian race over other parts of the globe than those now occupied by them is not, perhaps, a pleasant prospect; but a survey of the condition of the Far East will, I think, lead to the conviction that the march of events is fast bringing those vast and now neglected possessions within the reach of reclamation and development, and that the Mongolian race will take a leading part in this movement there can be little doubt. Their numbers and qualifications alike point to them as the coming race in those parts.... At present they are the labourers only, but... they will follow the Japanese slowly but surely in profiting by the teaching of European civilisation, whether for peace or war... If the transformation of forty million Japanese from the medieval ways of their past to the alertness and vigour of Western civilisation, has been the wonder of the world... what might the thorough awakening of four hundred millions of Chinese signify for humanity? Such an event would be fraught with consequences the contemplation of which may impress the mind with fear or with sanguine expectations, but never with indifference."

Twenty-five years later Rajah Charles was to develop this and still more extensive themes with the wisdom which his long years of rule in Sarawak had given him, and to become accurately and astonishingly prophetic.*

* In the brochure: "Queries, Past, Present and Future", by the Rajah of Sarawak. Published 1907. Considerable passages from this are given by Robert Payne in The White Rajahs of Sarawak.

In 1882, however, few men troubled themselves about such distant and unwelcome possibilities, and most of the reviews of Pioneering in the Far East, while prudently avoiding comment on the Sarawak dynastic issue confined themselves to the purely narrative portions of the book, and enlarged on the various travels described, since much of the ground covered was practically unknown to the English public of that date.

Three exceptions were the following:

The Whitehall Review, March 23, 1882.

"The references to the dispute between Rajah Brooke and his nephew Captain Brooke, are among the most notable features of the work, for the view presented is a novel one...."

John Bull, June 3, 1882.

"It is with Borneo that the mercantile career of Mr. Helms is mainly concerned, and he gives a very interesting account of that country and of the unfortunate disputes between Rajah Brooke and his nephew. Whilst acknowledging the great and heroic character of the former it is evident that Mr. Helms' own judgement in these unfortunate transactions is in favour of the latter..."

The Spectator, July 22, 1882.

"The second of the two long chapters on Borneo is largely devoted to a discussion of the merits of the unfortunate misunderstanding between Sir James Brooke and his nephew Captain Brooke, and in spite of Mr. Helms' well deserved respect and affection for the Rajah, he is clearly of the opinion that, so far as the special question was concerned the right was clearly on Captain Brooke's side. Judging simply from the documentary evidence, which seems to be given in these pages with both fullness and impartiality, we should say that Mr. Helms is certainly right in his verdict; but we may doubt whether it was worth while to revive an unfortunate and now happily half-forgotten controversy, which is of interest only to a few, and which has value only as a particular illustration of the melancholy general fact that real nobility of nature and harmony of aim do not hinder the very best of men from miserably misunderstanding each other."

Before long Helms was to find that from a purely worldly point of view it had certainly not been worth while to defend Captain Brooke's memory. I think myself that he would have done so even had he realised what the consequences would be, but he fought, so to speak, with one hand tied behind his back, for the whole truth could not be stated at that time. The woman whose influence ensured that the break should be irrevocable was still alive. It was December 30, 1906, before Angela Burdett Coutts died in her ninety-third year, and was buried in Westminster Abbey, and therefore her

name could not be mentioned. Nor of course could that of Rajah Charles, though the situation with regard to him was different.

We have seen that, up to 1875 at least, his relationship with Helms was a cordial one. Nor did Helms in his book permit himself more than one sentence which might be taken as implied criticism of the particular part which Charles Brooke had played, namely:

"That Sir James would have relented towards his nephew had time and circumstances permitted may well be believed; but another was ready to step into the place." (Pioneering, p.239.)

It is quite likely that the aspect of the whole matter which so closely concerned Charles, the question of the succession to the Raj, had not yet crystallised in Helms' mind when he wrote. But from Charles' point of view the publication of Pioneering was particularly inopportune, since two years earlier Captain Brooke's son, Hope Brooke, had come of age, and his uncle had written offering him his friendship and an allowance of £200 a year, adding that he was to "remember not to open anything like discussion, which can lead to nothing and do no good." (Runciman, The White Rajahs, p.170.) Rajah Charles had three sons by that time to replace the two who had died in infancy, and his mind was fixed upon perpetuating the succession of his own line. In fairness to him it must not be forgotten that in so doing he was planning to perpetuate the possession of that which was legally his, since the old Rajah's will left Sarawak to him and his heirs male, without reserve. But Captain Brooke had been much loved in the country, there were many who remembered him, and he had left a son. Helms too, in his own sphere, had been very popular. Hence, from Charles' point of view, any evidence given by the one man in favour of the other was a potential danger.

Furthermore, seven years later, in 1889, C.J. Bunyon when he published the McDougall journals, once more drew attention to

Pioneering by stating that Captain Brooke's case, "fairly, though not exhaustively" put, was to be found in it.*

* A passage in a letter dated 29 January, 1882, from Mr. Ayer Hooker, of Court Lodge, Lessness Heath, S.E., who apparently knew Helms well, underlines this as follows: "I expect it will be allowed that you are justified in taking the seat of a judge on the dynastic question. You have had a fuller knowledge than anyone else probably and you are no partisan. I have heard only one side of the question and of course there always is another side, so that I am not a little pleased with the decision you have come to. It ought to be satisfactory to the Grants, and altho' the question has perhaps ceased to be a practical one, and had come to be a mere sentiment, still there will be for many generations 'adherents of the Pretender,' and they will find food in your book."

Even then Helms' own position might not have been so adversely affected had he not proceeded to lose the greater part of his money through unwise speculation. A poor man is more vulnerable than a rich one. An entry in his journal reads: "Inveigled... in a series of unfortunate investments which... induced me again, in 1891, to return to the East." How, or by whom, the "inveigling" was done I do not know, nor does it matter. What did matter was that, quite naturally, his thoughts turned again to Singapore, and to Sarawak where he had spent so many years, where he knew he still had friends among the business community, and thought perhaps he could start again. It never seems to have occurred to him that he would no longer be welcome. Since Rajah Charles had been one of those he had known and been on good terms with for so many years, Helms, being the type of man he was, would have been unlikely to suspect animosity. And indeed of actual personal animosity there was probably none. But Charles was playing for high stakes. Naturally therefore he was not at all pleased to see Helms, and though he could scarcely go to the length of preventing him from entering the country it was not long before he managed to get rid of him.

Helms was in Sarawak from about July 1892 to February 1893, and did some fruitless prospecting up-country; and it was during or soon after that time that an odd incident took place at home in England. A Mr. Pape called upon Ann at the house in London where she was living with her eldest daughter and the three youngest children, who were still at school. On the pretext of wanting to use Pioneering in the Far East to advertise Helms' work in some way, he persuaded her to give up all the copies which were in the house, including those belonging to such of the children as were still at home. She was left with only one, the copy which her husband had given her.

Her daughter Mary, who happened to be at home at the time, suspected something strange, and later wrote an account of the episode, as follows:

"It was during that short time that a man called on Mother claiming to have met Father in the East (recently.) He wanted all the copies we had against my bitter protest, for I felt he was a fraud, and knew it when he began to talk about himself and Father smoking together - Father never smoked. What his motive was I never could fathom."

Her protests were overruled and the books went, never to be returned. Many years later I learnt what pretext the caller gave and that as he was known to the family Ann was not suspicious. Possibly any publisher's remainders were bought in at the same time.

It is, of course, not impossible that Charles Brooke suspected that Helms had come to Sarawak to spy out the land as an agent of others, and so cause trouble. But had there been any such concerted plan it would presumably have been off the record, and no evidence of it would have been preserved in any quarter.

The rest of the story is soon told. Helms spent a good many years prospecting in the Malay Peninsula, and also visited

Australia again, where a nephew of his had settled in Queensland. His perennial optimism continually beckoned him on in the hope that once again luck would come his way. He left few records of those years of hard work with nothing to show for them at the end. Times were changing. The adventurous pioneer prospector with no specialist training was giving place to the scientific prospector-geologist of today. Later a strange story spread in the East that Helms had died in reduced circumstances in Singapore some time in the late nineties. However, he did not die at that time. In the end advancing years began to affect even his seemingly inexhaustible energy. He returned to England in 1901, and except for a journey to Denmark to see his sister once more, he never left it again.

Chapter Twenty-four

The Last Echo

The last years of Helms' life were passed in Hampstead. Here he and Ann lived very quietly in a small house on what was then the outskirts of London, so much the outskirts that there was even a farm, complete with hayfields and livestock, quite close to them, and Ann had a small garden with roses and apple-trees. Here in 1909 they celebrated their golden wedding. In the little hall stood a fine Brunei gong which, in the old days, had summoned the large family to meals, and above Helms' bed hung a Malay parang, embellished with a tuft of red-dyed human hair. This was an object of intense interest to his grandchildren, who were strickly forbidden to touch it, and looked at it with awe, sure that the red must be blood.

His health was excellent, the Borneo climate, which wrought such havoc among many of the pioneers, did not seem to have affected his superb constitution in the least, and the only sign of advancing age was a slight deafness. In fine weather he might be seen almost daily, a small, spare old man, walking briskly downhill all the way to Marble Arch, from whence he would return by bus. Or sometimes, perhaps accompanied by a grandchild, his walk would take him up to the Heath. Many were the stories he could tell, of pirates and head-hunters, and all the exciting adventures of bygone days; in fact to a child he was an ideal grandfather. Only the slightest foreign intonation in his speech showed his Scandinavian origin, or sometimes a saying or a proverb that he would quote, such as the solemn warning once given to a small granddaughter: "Never marry a troll for his gold!" He occupied himself in

arranging and preserving his papers, the letters, reviews, etc., all being carefully bound by himself into stiff covers. And occasionally he wrote articles dealing with the Far East for the Spectator, the Empire Review, and other periodicals, usually under the pseudonym of Pioneer.

It was a month before his eighty-sixth birthday that the last echo of the strange happenings in which he had been involved reached him. He received the following letter:

"Windham Club,
St. James Square,
S.W.
March 7/11.

"Dear Mr. Helms,

"I had your address from Sir William Adamson, I don't know if you ever saw me in my childhood in Sarawak, but you will understand who I am when I say I am the son of Captain Brooke Brooke. I should much like to meet you as you so far are the only one who has written in favour of my father, all others have feared to offend the powers-that-be. I shall be in town tomorrow and shall be lunching here. I wonder if you could come and lunch with me at about 1:30? It would give me great pleasure to have a chat over old times. Would you kindly wire me whether you can come or not. I was having lunch yesterday with Mrs. Harvey.

"Yours very truly,
Hope Brooke."

This must have given him immense pleasure, and I feel sure that he hurried out himself to send the telegram of acceptance. Next day the meeting took place, and the following letter is dated a week later:

"Boddington House,
Byfield.
March 14th/11.

"Dear Mr. Helms,

"I found the copies of Empire Review and case of old letters on my return home, it was most kind of you to send me these mementos of the old times. I so much enjoyed our chat. I am sending you the book by Bampfylde I hate the sight of.*

* A History of Sarawak under its two White Rajahs by S. Baring-Gould & C.A. Bampfylde, London, 1909. This was an official history and Rajah Charles paid for its publication, (Runciman, The White Rajahs, Preface, p.x)

I have mislaid the Times criticism, I wish you would write and get a copy from them. I think you and I had better make a trip to Sarawak together, though it would have to be without the Rajah's knowledge. I have never been out since I left as a child and much want to see my mother's grave. I expect you would hardly feel up to it nowadays even if I did expenses, and I couldn't do it in luxury, as I have only just enough to scrape along on. What could one do it for?

"Yours sincerely,
Hope Brooke.

"The old Malay nurse (a man who carried me about) is I fancy alive, but has retired to his island. If I went out I should like to see him."*

* Mr. Brooke did go out to Sarawak a year or so later and was turned out by the Rajah. (Private information.) It was a virtual impossibility for anyone to enter the country at any time without the knowledge of the government.

These two letters, together with a third returning the papers and suggesting that they might meet again at some future date, Helms carefully fastened into the copy of Bampfylde. Mr. Brooke added, under his own name and address which is written inside the cover: "To L.V. Helms, March 11/11."

Helms lived for another seven years after that meeting, but the last four of them were saddened by the First World War. He saw in it an extension of the conflict which had been developing in his youth, between a rising Germany and the rest of Europe. And much to his chagrin he found himself in his extreme old age classified as an alien in the land of his adoption, since he had never taken out naturalisation papers.

He did not see the war's end. In the spring of 1918 he felt himself failing and knew that he had not much longer to live, and on July 26th the end came, very peacefully.

By his own wish he was cremated, and his ashes scattered.

He was the last survivor of those involved to any extent in the events of 1863, for Charles Brooke had died in May of the previous year.

In Copenhagen Christense, long a widow, last of the brothers and sisters of the far-off Varde days, died four months after him.

Ann survived him by ten years.

POSTSCRIPT

No doubt Helms, in the last years of his life, realised fully what had happened, yet possibly his reaction was more one of perplexity than anything else, of bewilderment that everything had, in the end, turned out so differently from what he had hoped. His boyhood's dream had come true for a short space of time and then, as is the way of dreams, it faded, and that his own financial imprudence had contributed to the fading must have made him very unhappy. But for the rest, not many people are fated through no will of their own to be caught up in the web of a dynastic intrigue, though no doubt it has happened often enough in history.

Helms was generous to a fault, apt to be over-sanguine, susceptible to flattery and an easy prey to the unscrupulous. Sir Steven Runciman's assessment of him as "somewhat complacent" is, I think, accurate. His unfailing optimism made him often see things in a rosier light than circumstances warranted, and also made him take great pleasure in whatever he was able to achieve. On the other hand it is doubtful whether a man of less optimism and energy would have been able to cope successfully with business conditions in Sarawak as they were in his day.

There is little doubt that the fact that Helms was not English by birth put him at a disadvantage, and also diminished the effect of his defence of Captain Brooke. Although he had worked with Britons for many years he never lived in England until his retirement, and as regards Sarawak he was the non-union man in what was virtually a "closed shop," the foreigner who must have no part in the history of a British undertaking. He never seems to have thought of strengthening his position by naturalisation, just why

one does not know; but I think that all his life he cherished a deep love for the country of his birth, and that he had no wish to sever, legally and for always, the ties that bound him to her. Also it has to be remembered that until the First World War such things as naturalisations, passports, and "papers" of all kinds, did not assume the crucial, sometimes terrible importance that they have today. To be a European in the Far East when Helms first went there was, quite simply, to be a European. Governments at home might play the age-old game of power politics, but in the East there was room for all, and Briton and Hollander, Dane and German, worked in general side by side in amity, and helped one another if the need arose. It has been left to the present day to accentuate national and political rivalries to such an extent that their evil effects often work themselves out even in personal contacts. Helms loved England, the land of his adoption, he served her interests to the best of his ability; his wife was English and his children were brought up to be English, his grandchildren were to be English and American. But he also loved Denmark, and the children and grandchildren have remained proud of their share of Danish blood.

Today, as Nielsen wrote in his life of that other Danish pioneer, Mads Lange, the dust of nearly a century has settled over these events. The protagonists in the quarrel, and its victims, have long left this world, and the happenings can be seen for what they are, a curious sidelight on a small but unusual piece of colonial history. I cannot regret that Helms chose to be "the only one" who wrote without fearing to offend the powers-that-were, for it would indeed go hard with the world if there were never men in it willing to protest against what they believe to be injustice.

Individual human tragedies involved in the destinies of nations and peoples have to take second place. They are balanced in

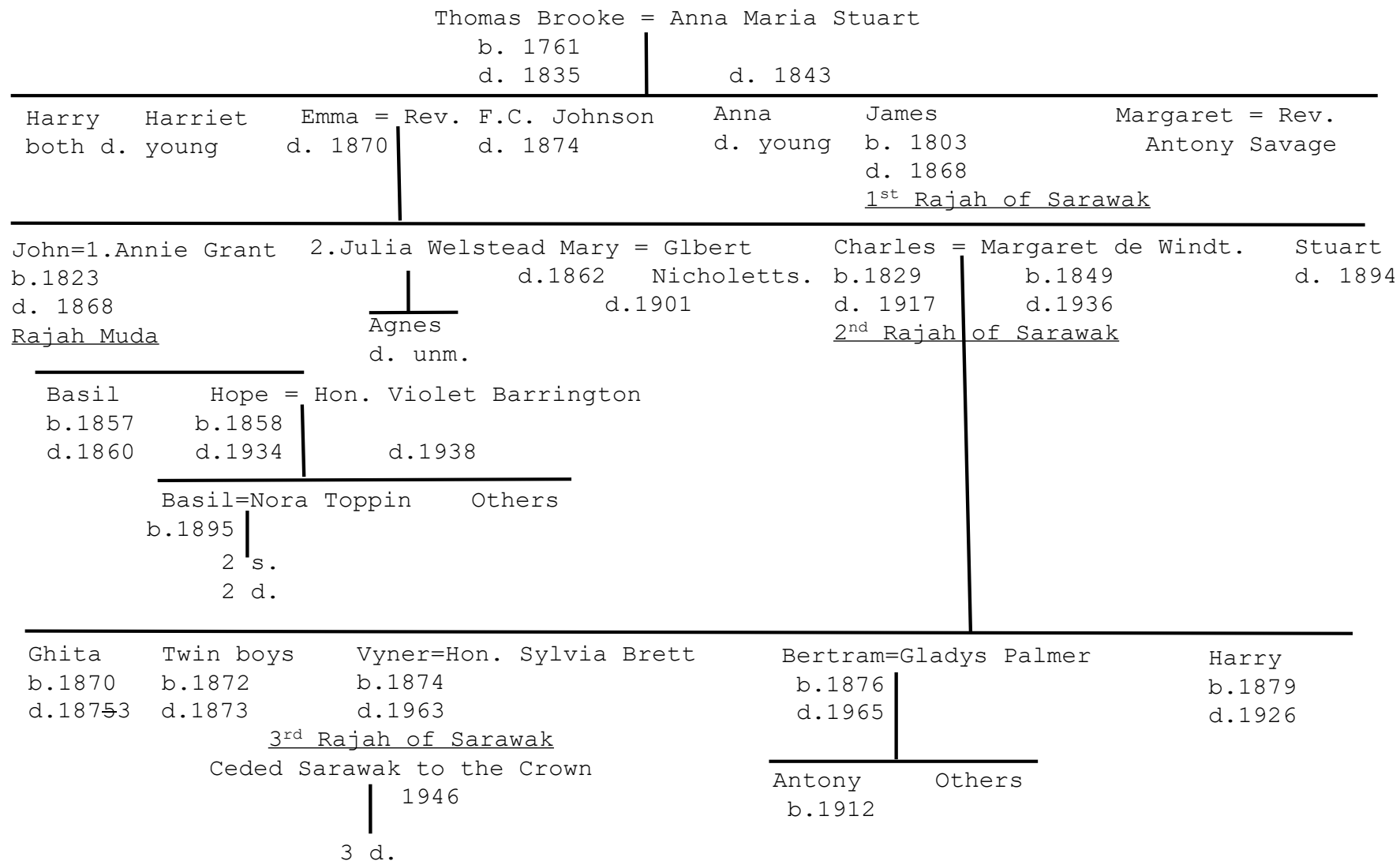
personal and not in national accounts and that final reckoning does not concern others. And whether the inscrutable decrees of destiny ensured for Sarawak the ruler best fitted to guide her through fifty years I am not competent to judge. But in writing the life-story of Ludvig Verner Helms from Jutland I have also written much of the life-story of the man who was to have been the second White Rajah, John Brooke Johnson Brooke from Somerset. The Brooke rulers are assured of an honourable place in history. He, though he never inherited his kingdom should be given his rightful position among them. And as regards Helms, his fate became indirectly so strangely entangled with that of Captain Brooke that in writing about it the two cannot be separated. He too worked faithfully in his day, though his part was to develop the commerce without which no modern state can hope to survive.

With the cession of Sarawak by the third White Rajah, the late Sir Charles Vyner Brooke, in 1946, the country became at last a Crown Colony and so entered upon a new chapter in its history. And now the Federation of Malaysia has come into being. Perhaps Sir James and his two nephews would not regret that these things should be so. But above all they would wish that, whatever changes and developments the future may have in store, the land to which they devoted their lives may grow and flourish in peace and prosperity. And Ludvig Verner Helms would be one of the first to join in that wish.

"Nor does it matter at all to the dead whether they receive justice at the hands of succeeding generations. But to the living, to do justice, - however belatedly, - should matter."

The Defeat of the Spanish Armada,
Garrett Mattingley, p.316. (Jonathan Cape.)

THE BROOKE FAMILY



One Christian name only given in all cases.

John Brooke Johnson took the additional surname of Brooke in 1848

Charles Anthoni Johnson took the additional surname of Brooke in 1865

Appendix

(1)

Gold played a significant part in attracting the early Chinese junk-traders to West Borneo, and some gold was probably brought from Bau to Santubong, in the Sarawak River delta, as early as the 8th century A.D., if not before. A great Chinese trade developed, and continued until about 1350 A.D., when the advent of Islam and centralisation of power in Brunei weakened the power of the South-West. Such gold as was mined thereafter (cir. 1350 - 1800) was centred behind Sambas, over the watershed in what presently became Dutch Borneo, (and is now Kalimantan.) Probably Bau gold was still to some extent worked, but by Chinese labour direct and from that side.

Thus the direct Sarawak-China linkage was lost for nearly five centuries, until Sir James Brooke appeared on the scene, as the first westerner ever proved to have approached Borneo - so widely known on its other coasts long before - by this route. The fact that he headed up the Sarawak River for Bau in search of antimony, not gold, is further evidence of this break. In the following century many millions of gold were to be won again, supporting both Borneo Company and Brooke Raj; but precious little antimony by comparison. The Bau gold field is still being worked profitably, on a smaller scale, today by Chinese.

(Summary by Tom Harrisson, based on chronological and historical studies, as published in Sarawak Museum Journal, Oriental Art, Journal Royal Asiatic Society, etc., 1949 - 1961.)

(2)

St. John's original appointment as the Rajah's private secretary is stated by Sir Steven Runciman (The White Rajahs, p.90,) to have been made on the recommendation of Henry Wise, as the son of a business associate. Wise was a London business man who was for some years Financial Adviser in London to Sir James. Sir James had helped him to obtain a charter from the British Government to work coal and minerals on the island of Labuan, and from the Sultan of Brunei the right to work them in certain districts of the mainland, thus forming the Eastern Archipelago Company. The Mining and Export Rights in Sarawak had been given to Mr. Robert Henderson of Mincing Lane, in 1846, and after disagreement had arisen between Sir James and Wise it is recorded in the proceedings of the E.A. Co. that Henderson,

supported by several others, made more than one approach to be allowed to take over control of it, but always subject to Wise being excluded from the new set-up proposed. These approaches were always turned down. This information only came to light quite recently, after the publication of The Borneo Story in 1956. (Information from Mr. T.C. Martine.) Wise's London firm, Melville Wise & Co. went bankrupt at the end of 1846, and the Rajah broke off relations with him. (Runciman, The White Rajahs, pp.92-3.) Afterwards as told in Chap. 9, the Borneo Company Ltd. was formed, with Robert Henderson as Chairman.

(3)

The Old Cathedral.

This humble yet lovely little cathedral shared with the Museum the place of central landmark in Kuching over decades. When the new ferroconcrete, semi-modernistic St. Tomas' was completed in the fifties, it was immediately pulled down. Many felt that this was done with indecent haste and lack of taste. A strong minority thought it could well have stood, in its plain, fine old wood, as a lasting monument to the pioneer days of Christian effort, - serving as a chapel beside the monolithic new pile alongside. (Note from Mr Tom Harrisson.)

(4)

As an instance of the implacable hostility which Miss Coutts showed to any who dared to voice criticism of the events of 1863, the following passage from a letter written by Alfred Russel Wallace may be given. Wallace had been an invited member of her select circle at Stratton Street: "but my unfortunate habit of speaking my thoughts too plainly broke off the acquaintance. The Rajah's nephew, Captain Brooke, who had been formally designated as Sir James's successor under the Malay title Tuan Muda, [Rajah Muda] had done or written something, (I forget what), to which Sir James had objected, a disagreement ensued, which resulted in the Captain being deposed from the heirship, and his younger brother Charles, the present Rajah, being nominated instead. As I was equally friendly and intimate with both parties and heard both sides, I felt that Captain had been rather hardly treated, and one day when the subject was mentioned at Stratton Street I ventured to say so. This evidently displeased Lady Burdett-Coutts, and I was never invited again..."

Quoted by Tom Harrisson in his paper Alfred Russel Wallace and a Century of Evolution in Borneo, Singapore, 1958.

(5)

With regard to the Tegora Bungalow Mr. T.C. Martine writes:

"I am probably one of very few now who ever saw it, and then only the "shell." It was of brick and well situated, as we found when the jungle round it had been partially cleared - but then, in 1939, a large tree had grown up through the floor. Constant reference to it in Company correspondence as 'the Castle' led me to look for it - and it seems that in the latter decade of the mine it had to be vacated periodically in favour of the Rajah, who liked to bring up parties on horse-back from Busau, the Company's antimony collecting point on the Sarawak River. The change of air from the muggy atmosphere of Kuching must have been appreciated. a 'fine bath' was, in fact, made in the stream below the 'Castle' by the Mineral Properties Representative, from bricks from the old ruin."

Malay Words and Titles

Abang = lit. Elder Brother. Courtesy title given to the sons of Datus.

Bandar = Town or port. Now archaic and never used as such.

Datu = lit. Grandfather. In Sarawak the highest title after Rajah. Official not hereditary.

Haji = One who has made the pilgrimage to Mecca, (the Haj.)

Imam = Priest in charge of a mosque.

Katib = The preacher who expounds the Koran in the mosque. He is under the Imam. On the Council of State the Tuan Katib acted as scribe or secretary.

Nakodah = shipmaster, merchant.

Pangeran = The highest hereditary title in old Brunei after the Sultan. Meaning noble (by birth.)

Rajah = King. Hence Rajah Tuah = Old Rajah, and Rajah Muda = Young Rajah, (in Sarawak the heir-apparent.)

Sherif = A title assumed by male descendants of the Prophet.

Tuan = Sir, Lord. Hence Tuan Besar = Mighty Tuan, and Tuan Muda = Young Tuan, title given to the sons of a Rajah.

Temenggong = Another high official title, Commander in Chief.

The Datu Bandar (head of the town or port,) the Datu Temenggong, (Commander in Chief,) and the Datu Imam, (religious head of the Muslim community,) who were appointed to the Council of State on its formation in 1855, were members of the old Malay ruling families of Sarawak who had rebelled against the domination of Brunei, and were reinstated by Rajah James.

Possible Illustrations

Part One.

Helms at the age of 21, or Helms in middle life.

Adam Helms or Mathilde Auguste Helms.

Mads Lange.

Lange's daughter Cecilie, Sultana of Johore, with her husband and son.

Lange's establishment, outside and inside. From paintings by a Chinese artist reproduced in Dr. Nielsen's Mads Lange til Bali.

Prince Chuthamani.

Parts Two and Three.

Sir James Brooke in later years, (the one published in the Correspondence.)

Captain John Brooke Johnson Brooke.

Ann with the first child.

Bertha Crookshank.

Bishop and Mrs. McDougall.

"My faithful Abdullah."

Aneberg.

St. Thomas Church, Kuching. Watercolour of interior by Mrs. McDougall. In possession of the S.P.G.

The Sir James Brooke retaking Kuching. Watercolour by Helms, now in possession of the Borneo Company Ltd.

Miss Coutts, Mrs. Brown and a party of friends having tea in the garden of Holly Lodge.

Facsimile of part of Charles Grant's letter to Helms.

Maps.

Denmark and the Duchies.

The Far East as known to Helms.

Bali, showing the native kingdoms. From Aage Krarup Nielsen's book Mads Lange til Bali.

Sarawak as known to Helms.

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INDEX

- Abdullah..... 101, 343
- Adamson, William, Sir . 185, 199-201, 209, 213, 223, 225, 269, 275, 324, 332
- Ah Ling..... 278
- Alaska (ship)..... 315
- Albatross (ship)..... 189
- Alexandra, Princess of Denmark 249
- Aneberg. 171, 180, 181, 194, 209, 262, 343
- Antimony... 71, 96, 97, 101, 102, 105, 137, 141, 178-180, 185, 201, 211, 268, 276, 277, 283, 339, 341
- Apotek..... 7, 9, 10, 12-14, 16
- Archangel, Russia..... 321
- Astana..... 296, 302
- Auchincloss, P.W..... 269, 278
- Australia. 31, 36, 147, 148, 150, 194, 330
- Badong, Bali. 36, 40, 43, 44, 51, 55, 58, 63
- Bali... 1, 16, 25, 27, 29-64, 98, 146, 147, 343, 344
- Bampfylde, C.A. 99, 332, 333, 344
- Bangkok, Thailand 73, 77, 81-90, 199
- Baram, Sarawak 308
- Bartlett Burdett Coutts, Ashmead
See Burdett Coutts, Ashmead
Bartlett
- Bau, Sarawak. 105, 107, 113, 114, 120, 121, 137, 339
- Beauchamp, Harry..... 148
- Beauchamp, Henry..... 148, 194
- Belgium. 214, 215, 231, 251, 286, 289
- Bergreen, Sofie 13, 322. See also Gyntelberg, Jacob and Sofie née Bergreen
- Bintulu, Sarawak.. 199, 201, 217, 218, 221, 222, 305, 308, 309
- Bishop of Labuan.. 110, 127, 219. See also McDougall, Thomas Frances, Bishop; Chambers, Walter, Bishop
- Borneo.. 168, 169, 171, 179, 184, 185, 194, 197, 201, 202, 209, 212, 213, 218, 221, 268, 291, 293, 323, 326, 331, 339
- Borneo Company, The. 1-3, 86, 95, 101, 111-120, 123, 128, 130, 134, 135, 138, 139, 143, 145, 153, 156, 158, 162, 165, 168, 169, 171, 175, 179, 182, 184, 186, 187, 195, 196, 199, 202, 210, 211-213, 222, 224, 226, 243, 245, 248, 250-252, 257, 259, 261, 267, 269-273, 276, 283-285, 287, 289, 295, 296, 301, 305, 306, 311, 312, 318, 340, 341, 343
- Borneo Story, The*... 2, 200, 210, 261, 272, 283, 303, 340, 344

Boulogne, France..... 320, 322

Bowring, John, Sir..... 90

Brodie, W.G..... 311

Brooke, Annie née Grant 113,
142, 150, 296, 338

Brooke, Vice-Admiral Basil
Charles Barrington..... 3, 338

Brooke, Charles Anthoni Johnson,
Sir (Rajah of Sarawak) 100,
113, 125, 128, 133, 136, 140,
142, 144, 158, 163, 169, 181,
192, 210, 232-235, 239, 242,
255, 259, 260, 266, 274, 279,
284, 285, 287, 290-293, 295-297,
300-302, 304-312, 319, 320, 325,
327-329, 333, 334, 338, 341

Brooke, Charles Vyner de Windt,
Sir (Rajah of Sarawak).. 337, 338

Brooke, Francis Basil.. 144, 193,
338

Brooke, George... 151, 157, 176,
177. See also Walker, Reuben
George

Brooke, Ghita..... 239, 303, 338

Brooke, James, Sir (Rajah of
Sarawak).. 1, 34, 52, 55, 61, 71,
73, 84, 85, 93-103, 105, 107-
111, 113, 114, 116-121, 123,
126, 128, 130-145, 150-165, 167-
170, 172-177, 183, 187, 189,
192, 193, 195-197, 199-208, 214-
216, 219-222, 224-257, 259, 260,
262-270, 273-275, 279-281, 284-
294, 309, 323, 324, 326, 327,
337-344

Brooke, John Brooke Johnson,
Captain (Rajah Muda of Sarawak)
1, 3, 97-100, 103, 106-108, 111,
113, 117, 126, 128, 140-145,
150-152, 154-165, 168-177, 179,
181-184, 190, 192, 193, 199,
202-205-208, 211-215, 219-222,
224-257, 259, 260, 262-270,
273, 284-288, 290-294, 323, 326,
327, 328, 332, 335, 337, 338,
340, 343, 344

Brooke, John Charles Evelyn Hope
3, 150, 193, 287, 290, 327, 332,
333, 338

Brooke, Julia née Welstead.. 168,
216, 217, 221, 296, 338

Brooke, Margaret née de Windt,
Lady (Ranee of Sarawak) 122,
171, 239, 262, 296, 297, 300-
306, 309, 318, 320, 338, 344

Brown, Harriet.... 152, 221, 222,
232, 234, 280, 286, 288, 289,
343

Bruce, Ann Amelia. See Helms, Ann
Amelia née Bruce.....

Bruce, Emma See Wilson, Emma née
Bruce

Bruce, Thomas and Louisa.... 167,
168, 179, 195, 198

Brunei 94-96, 108, 115, 140,
181, 183-186, 190-192, 197, 199-
202, 205, 302, 307, 308, 331,
339, 342. See also Sultan of
Brunei

Bruni See Brunei

Bullock, Reverend..... 244

Bulwer, Henry 307, 308

Bunyon, C.J.. 108, 125, 170, 172,
208, 241, 244, 245, 256, 260,
264, 272, 286, 291, 293, 327,
344

Burd, Captain John... 30, 33, 34, 36, 60
 Burdett Coutts, Ashmead Bartlett
 323, 324
 Burdett Coutts, Angela, Baroness
 152-155, 158, 160-164, 173, 174,
 176, 192, 202, 208, 216, 221,
 222, 227, 228, 231-234, 236,
 239, 241-243, 246, 247, 249-255,
 257, 262, 266-270, 272-275, 279,
 280, 284-291, 293, 323, 324,
 326, 340, 343, 344
 Burrator.... 163, 172, 227, 232,
 237, 274, 288, 290
 Busau, Sarawak.... 179, 187, 276,
 302, 341

 California, U.S... 1, 64-72, 301,
 311, 315, 316, 320
 Cambodia... 1, 72-81, 83, 88, 89,
 314
 Canton, China..... 30, 64, 114
 Cape Colony, South Africa ... 21,
 22, 24, 25.
 Cape of Good Hope, South Africa
 23, 163, 180, 184, 284
 Cape Verde Islands..... 24
 Castle Huntley (ship)..... 93
 Cavanagh, Colonel 216, 224, 226,
 227, 229, 234, 238, 249, 250
 Chakranbongse, Chula, Prince of
 Thailand..... 3, 86, 87, 89, 344
 Chambers, Walter, Bishop.... 98,
 127, 243, 281, 296, 297, 307
 Chambers, Elizabeth née Woolley
 ... 127, 129, 133, 281, 284, 297,
 301, 305, 307
 Charybdis (ship)..... 200, 205
 Chinese Insurrection .. 106, 110-
 138, 153, 155, 162, 169, 170,
 210, 286, 297, 299
 Chuthamani, Prince and Deputy
 King of Siam..... 88, 344
 Cinnabar 271, 276, 277, 279,
 280, 282, 298, 304. *See also*
mercury; quicksilver
 Civil War, American..... 211, 275
 Clapp, Mary Sybil née Helms.. 329
 Coal.... 97, 109, 112, 141, 187,
 195, 201, 247-249, 265, 283,
 308, 339
 Colombo (ship)..... 231
 Comstock Silver Mine, Nevada,
 U.S..... 316
 Conroy, Dr..... 260
 Coquette (ship)..... 242
 Courier (ship)..... 201, 213, 223
 Crookshank, Arthur, Col. and
 Bertha.... 98, 99, 103, 113, 117,
 120-123, 131, 133, 139, 144,
 171, 182, 189, 190, 198, 203-
 205, 207, 213, 238, 244, 249,
 260, 272, 288, 296-298, 302,
 304, 306, 343
 Cruickshank, J.B. "Fitz", Dr.
 189, 204, 210
 Crymble, William... 98, 100, 106,
 120, 121
 Dane. 1, 20, 29, 30, 33, 302, 336
 Datu.... 103, 115, 118, 119, 121,
 122, 127, 136, 169, 204, 231,
 232, 234, 243, 342

De Windt, Harry..... 303

De Windt, Margaret .. See Brooke, Margaret née de Windt, Lady

Denmark.. 1, 6, 7-20, 30, 61, 62, 165, 167, 169, 222, 249, 302, 322, 330, 336, 343

Dido (ship)..... 182, 183

Duang, Ang, King of Cambodia.... 74-80

Duncan Dunbar (ship)..... 148

Dyak(s) . 96, 101, 102, 104, 110, 118, 130, 132, 133, 136-139, 189, 190, 259, 273, 294, 300, 301, 304

Eastern Archipelago Co. 111, 187, 339

Edwardes, G.W., Governor.... 178, 183-192, 195, 198

Elgin, Lord..... 216, 227, 256

Elisabethschule..... 168

Fairbairn, Thomas, Sir.... 155, 172, 174, 177, 239, 286, 290

Falcon (ship)..... 33

Family Tree, Brooke..... 338

Fenwick, C. 309

Flagstaff Hill, California, U.S. 70, 315

Frances, Emma 98. See also Johnson, Rev. Francis and Emma Frances

Gardner, Dagmar née Helms.... 2, 180, 198, 222, 239, 262, 280

General Wyndham (ship)..... 179

Gilfillan, Samuel.... 182, 184, 186, 196, 197, 199, 254, 257, 259, 275

Gold mining.. 64, 67-69, 71, 105, 114, 117, 124, 148, 277, 283, 339

Good Luck (ship)... 127, 128, 138

Governor of Labuan.. 73, 96, 183, 197, 198, 289, 290, 307. See also Brooke, James, Sir; Edwardes, G.W.; Pope-Hennessy, John, Sir

Grant Papers.. 3, 126, 160, 161, 173, 207, 227, 229, 231, 232, 239, 240, 242, 245, 253, 255, 256, 344

Grant, Charles T. C. .. 100, 113, 131, 142, 143, 144, 156, 172, 177, 207, 211, 225, 244, 245, 253, 255, 256, 285-287, 323, 328, 343. See also *Grant Papers*.

Grove, The..... 322

Gruda (ship)..... 146

Gunung Agung..... 40, 42

Gusti Djilantek.. 38, 39, 50-54, 56

Gutta percha (latex).... 188, 319

Gyntelberg, Jacob, Dr. and Sofie née Bergreen... 13, 14, 16, 167, 322

Hamburg, Germany.. 8, 16, 18-22, 65

Hampstead, England..... 331

Hardie, J.... 277, 278, 281, 301, 305, 308

Harrisson, Tom.. 3, 61, 105, 144, 339, 340, 344

Harvey, John.... 116, 128, 135, 181, 182, 185-190, 197, 200, 212, 217, 219-222, 224, 225, 227, 238, 242, 247, 249, 250, 253, 255, 261-263, 265, 269, 271, 275, 295, 304, 332

Hasim, Rajah Muda..... 94, 95

Hay, Robert.. 142, 181, 217, 222, 244, 255, 264, 268, 281

Heartsease (ship).... 256, 279, 308, 309

Helms, Ann Amelia née Bruce... 4, 167-169, 179, 180, 182, 189, 194, 195, 197, 198, 216, 222, 239, 261, 262, 274, 276-278, 280, 282, 284, 296, 299, 300, 307, 317, 321, 322, 329, 331, 334, 343

Helms, Adam..... 7-9, 343

Helms, Appolonia..... 9

Helms, Christense Petronelle.... 15, 16, 167, 330, 334

Helms, Dagmar..... See Gardner, Dagmar née Helms

Helms, Heinrich..... 9, 10

Helms, Katherine..... 148

Helms, Mary Sybil See Clapp, Mary Sybil née Helms

Helms, Mathilde Augusta.. 2, 10-12, 14, 16, 21-23, 167, 178, 194, 197, 220, 274, 276, 322, 343

Helms, Rudolph..... 7, 10

Henderson, Messrs. R.&J.... 71, 97. See also Robert Henderson

Henderson, Robert.... 111, 158, 212, 246, 254, 261, 262, 269, 270, 284, 295, 296, 303, 305, 317, 339, 340

Hennessy, John Pope, Sir ... See Pope-Hennessy, John, Sir

Highgate, England.... 152, 280, 307, 317

Hongkong, China.. 30, 33, 60, 64, 65, 71, 275, 314

Hooker, Ayer..... 328

Horsburgh, S., Rev..... 260

Houghton, Edward Price, Dr. and Mrs..... 261, 300, 301, 303

Jacob, Gertrude... 203-205, 207, 295

Japan..... 65, 201, 314, 315

Java, Indonesia.. 31, 37, 39, 44, 51, 146, 218, 272

Johanna Caesar (ship).... 21, 22, 106, 107

John Little & Co..... 181, 189, 194, 196

Johnson, Charles Anthoni, Sir See Brooke, Charles Anthoni Johnson, Sir

Johnson, John Brooke, Captain See Brooke, John Brooke Johnson, Captain

Johnson, Francis Charles, Rev. and Emma Frances.. 98, 160, 172, 288, 291, 338

Johnson, Stuart.... 288, 290, 338

Kampot, Cambodia... 74-77, 79, 82

Kanowit, Sarawak.. 119, 146, 188, 189, 197, 210, 281, 301
 Karangasem, Bali... 32-35, 37-39, 50, 53-56
 Katibas, Sarawak... 300, 301, 304
 Kayan(s)..... 221, 259, 268
 Kelantan, Malaysia..... 73, 82
 Kemp, Mr. and Mrs. 303, 307
 Kenwat 319
 Keppel, Henry, Sir, Admiral of the Fleet..... 96, 132, 138
 King, George ... 29, 32-36, 39, 40, 51, 61
King and I, The..... 86. See also Leonowens, Anna
 Klung Kung, Bali... 31, 50, 55, 56-59, 63
 Knox, A.A.... 159, 164, 192, 239, 252
 Kuching, Sarawak.. 1, 94, 95, 98, 99, 101, 105-107, 109, 110, 113, 115, 116, 119, 121, 126-130, 132-134, 142, 178-182, 188, 196, 198, 202, 211, 216, 222, 234, 235, 239, 242, 259-262, 266, 268, 273, 275, 278, 281, 285, 287, 295, 296, 299-302, 310, 318, 340, 341, 343
 Kongsii.. 106, 113, 114, 127, 130, 136. See also Kungsi
 Kungsi.. 121, 123, 124, 128. See also Kongsii
 Kuta, Bali... 36, 37, 43, 52, 55, 57, 59, 60, 63
 La Touche, Mr..... 233, 239, 242
 Labuan, Malaysia .. 97, 110, 127, 187, 191, 195, 219, 225, 260, 261, 302, 307-309, 339, 344. See also Bishop of Labuan; Governor of Labuan
 Lange, Christian... 61, 62, 146, 147
 Lange, Hans.... 44, 62, 146, 147
 Lange, Mads.. 15, 16, 25, 29, 30, 32-37, 39, 40, 42-44, 49, 51, 52, 55, 57-63, 146, 147, 336
 Lanun(s)..... 217-219, 240, 248
 Lanyon, John..... 306, 309-312
 Lapland, Finland..... 320
 Lausanne, Switzerland... 319, 320
 Leonowens, Anna... 86, 88, 199, 344
 Letters from L.V. Helms:
 to Adamson, William185, 200, 201, 209, 213, 223, 225, 269
 to Auchincloss, Mr.269
 to Beauchamp, Henry194
 to Borneo Co. Directors, The (Mincing Lane) ..116, 184, 193, 211, 213, 250, 259, 268
 to Brooke, James, Sir (Rajah).....265
 to Brooke, John Brooke Johnson, Captain.....181
 to Bruce, Thomas ...179, 195
 to Bruce, Louisa198
 to Cruickshank, J.B. ...210
 to Edwardes, Gov.191

to Gilfillan, Sam .182, 184,
 186, 196, 197, 254, 257, 259
 to Gomes, W.H.189
 to Harvey, John ...181, 182,
 185, 186, 187, 189, 190, 197,
 200, 212, 217, 220-222, 224,
 225, 238, 247, 248, 249, 253,
 255, 256, 261, 263, 269, 271
 to Hay, Robert222
 to Helms, Ann Amelia ...276-
 281, 300, 302-311, 317
 to Helms, Mathilde Augusta
 21-23, 194, 197, 220, 274,
 276
 to Henderson, Robert ...262,
 270
 to Little, Mrs.261
 to Millar, Mr. ... 224, 240,
 248
 to Murchison, Roderick, Sir
 295
 to John Little & Co. ...181,
 189, 194, 196
 to Smith and Elder, Messrs.
 216
 to Tidman, Paul ...182, 188,
 196, 197, 198, 210, 211, 274
 Letters to L.V. Helms:
 from Adamson, William ..200,
 324
 from Borneo Company, The ...
 138
 from Brooke, Charles
 Anthoni Johnson, Sir (Rajah)
 295, 297, 319, 320
 from Brooke, James, Sir
 (Rajah)....108, 113, 128, 140,
 143, 165, 250
 from Brooke, John Brooke
 Johnson, Captain..... 106-107,
 144, 145
 from Brooke, John Charles
 Evelyn Hope.....332, 333
 from Chambers, Walter,
 Bishop.....297
 from Edwardes, Gov.191
 from Grant, Charles131,
 177, 285, 287, 323
 from Hooker, Ayer328
 from Kenwat318
 from Keppel, Henry, Sir .132
 from McDougall, Thomas
 Frances, Bishop.....280, 284
 from Tidman, Paul .188, 197,
 222, 227, 241, 281
 Lind, Jenny..... 21
 Little, Dr. and Mrs.... 209, 210,
 261
 Little, John & Co..... See John
 Little & Co.
 Liza Weber (ship)..... 220
 Lombok, Indonesia... 27, 29-40,
 51, 55, 56, 61
 MacEwen & Co..... 65, 74
 Malabar (ship)..... 180, 182
 Malay Peninsula..... 82, 329
 Malay(s)... 2, 5, 26, 40, 53, 73,
 79, 81, 87, 88, 96, 99, 101-105,
 115, 118-125, 127-136, 139-141,

144, 146, 169, 173, 176, 182,
 189-191, 193, 196, 197, 203,
 210, 224, 226, 229, 243, 271,
 272, 277, 285, 308, 331, 333,
 340, 342

Martine, T. C..... 3, 171, 303,
 340, 341

Mataram, Lombok, Indonesia.. 32-
 36, 39, 51, 55, 61

Maurois, André..... 3, 91

McDougall, Thomas Frances,
 Bishop and Harriette, Mrs.... 98,
 99, 109, 110, 113, 115, 118,
 120-132, 143, 144, 150, 165,
 170, 176, 177, 185, 189, 193,
 198, 199, 208, 209, 216, 217,
 219, 220, 225, 240-245, 248,
 251, 256, 257, 260, 261, 264,
 265, 267, 273, 274, 280, 284,
 290, 296, 297, 303, 322, 327,
 343

McDougall Memoirs.... 108, 113,
 125, 129, 130, 133, 143, 144,
 150, 165, 170, 193, 208, 217,
 219, 240, 241, 244, 245, 256,
 260, 261, 265, 272, 273, 286,
 291, 293, 344

Mekong River..... 74, 314

Melbourne, Australia..... 148

Mercury.. 283. See also cinnabar;
 quicksilver

Michael Angelo (ship)..... 27, 29

Middleton, Peter and Mrs. .. 107,
 117, 120, 126, 130, 131, 139,
 170, 268

Millar, Mr... 217, 224, 240, 242,
 248

Mongkut, King Rama IV of Siam 73,
 81, 85-88, 199

Monteiro, Mr..... 74, 76, 77

Muka, Sarawak ... 102, 140, 181-
 186, 188-192, 197-201, 217, 222,
 224, 240, 273, 276, 303-305,
 308, 309

Murchison, Roderick, Sir..... 295

Musahore, Sherif.. 169, 181, 183-
 185, 190-192, 197, 200

Nagasaki, Japan..... 314

Nassau (ship)..... 305

Nicholetts, Harry..... 117-121

Nicholetts, Mary... 109, 118, 142

Nielsen, Aage Krarup, Dr.... 30,
 32, 35-40, 43, 52, 57, 59, 62,
 63, 336, 344

Oneida (ship)..... 149

Paknam, Thailand..... 83

Pamphlet (Captain Brooke's) . See
Statement Regarding Sarawak

Pangeran Dipah.... 140, 181, 190,
 191, 197, 200

Pangeran Makota..... 94, 96

Pangeran Matusin... 140, 224, 248

Pantaleon (ship)..... 81

Pape, Mr..... 329

Parker House..... 68

Peaks, The.. 283. See also Tegora
 Mine

Penty, Charles and Ann.... 119,
 121, 255-257

Pioneering in the Far East.. 2, 6, 99, 111, 116, 130, 132, 134, 137, 141, 142, 154, 155, 157-159, 164, 172, 173, 192, 193, 203, 204, 228, 229, 254, 286, 323, 325, 327-329, 344

Pioneering in the Far East, reviews of..... 324-326

Pirates.. 31, 41, 64, 74, 75, 82, 94, 100, 102, 136, 162, 210, 217-220, 241, 248, 249, 331

Pluto (ship)..... 97, 98, 100

Pope-Hennessy, James..... 290

Pope-Hennessy, John, Sir.... 289, 290, 307, 309

Quicksilver.. 277, 282, 283, 298, 300, 301, 303, 306, 309, 316, 319. See also cinnabar; mercury

Rafar, Pastor..... 20, 21, 25

Rainbow (ship).... 176, 196, 197, 205, 209, 211, 217-219, 221, 223, 226, 227, 235, 240, 242, 248, 254, 266, 279

Raja of Sarawak, The... 99, 100, 109, 113, 121, 139-141, 153, 155-157, 172, 174, 192, 205, 344

Rajah Brooke and Baroness Burdett Coutts.... 152, 161-164, 173-175, 206, 215, 216, 221, 229, 231, 233-238, 241-245, 248, 250-255, 257, 264, 266-268, 273, 274, 285, 287, 288-291, 344

Rajah Dewa Agung Ketoet of Klung Kung..... 31, 50, 56-59

Rajah Ida Ratu of Karangasem.. 35

Rajah Kassiman of Badong... 36, 37, 44, 45, 55, 57, 59, 61

Rajah Muda.... 94, 202-207, 225, 226, 236, 237, 240-242, 249, 250, 254, 286, 291, 323, 340, 342

Rajah Muda Hasim of Sarawak.. See Hasim, Rajah Muda

Rajah of Beliling.. 38, 50, 52, 56

Rajah of Gianjar..... 45, 56, 57

Rajah of Karangasem.. 38, 39, 50, 53

Rajah of Kelantan..... 82

Rajah of Mataram.. 33-36, 39, 55, 61

Rajah of Tabanan..... 57, 62

Rajah Tuah.... 176, 204, 207, 342

Raleigh (ship)..... 138

Rama III, King of Siam.. 73, 77, 81, 82

Rama IV, King of Siam..... See Mongkut, King Rama IV of Siam

Randalls Park..... 284, 305

Ranee Margaret..... See Brooke, Margaret née de Windt, Lady (Ranee of Sarawak)

Read, W.H..... 245, 250, 254, 266

Redjang, Sarawak.. 188, 259, 301, 304

Rentap..... 210

Rival (ship)..... 186

Royalist (ship).... 94, 279, 281, 300, 302, 304

Runciman, Steven, Sir.. 99, 335, 339, 344

Ruppell, George.... 98, 99, 123, 124, 127

Russell, John, Lord.... 226, 233, 236, 249, 256

Russell, Mr..... 137, 277

Russia.. 8, 11, 66, 302, 320, 321

Rutter, Owen.... 152, 163, 175, 222, 344

Sago trade .. 102, 130, 140, 178, 180, 181, 185, 186, 188, 189, 197, 201, 218, 222, 225, 256, 268, 273, 274, 303, 304, 319

Saigon, Vietnam..... 74, 80, 314

Salt Lake City, Utah, U.S.... 316

Samarahan River, Sarawak... 121, 132

San Francisco, California, U.S. 66, 67, 69, 70, 315, 316

Scout (ship)..... 227

Shanghai, China.... 194, 311, 314

Siam... 2, 72-74, 77, 81-90, 199, 275, 318, 344. *See also* Bangkok

Simunjan Coal Mines..... 112, 247

Singapore.... 15, 16, 21, 22, 26, 27, 29, 31, 33, 41, 43, 60, 63, 65, 70, 71, 73, 74, 80-83, 86, 94, 96-98, 102, 107, 108, 110, 113, 114, 116, 127, 133, 135, 137, 138, 141, 143, 145, 146, 162, 170, 174, 178, 181-183, 186-189, 195-197, 199-202, 209, 211, 213, 218, 220, 222-224, 226, 227, 234, 239-241, 244, 250, 251, 253-256, 259, 261, 264, 266, 269, 272, 274-276, 278, 285, 305, 309, 318, 324, 328, 330, 340, 344, 345

Sir James Brooke (ship).... 112, 116, 118, 134, 135, 343

Skelton, Harry..... 300, 301, 306

Smith, John Abel.. 233, 269, 286, 290

Smuts, Dr. and Mrs..... 21, 25

Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (S.P.G.)..... 3, 143, 219, 220, 241, 244, 343, 344

Sourabaya, Indonesia..... 31, 146

Spartan (ship)..... 138

Sri Sarawak(ship).... 301, 305, 308-310

St. John, Spenser, Sir.. 98, 100, 109, 111, 114-116, 124, 175, 183, 185, 192, 196-200, 202, 203, 205, 206, 213, 214, 220, 226-229, 233, 236, 237, 239-241, 267, 268, 270, 278, 287-289, 299, 323, 339, 344, 345

Stately (ship)..... 147

Statement Regarding Sarawak, A 142, 157, 173, 203-205, 252, 256

Stellenbosch, South Africa.. 21, 25

Stuart, Charles..... 284

Suez Canal..... 149, 169, 276

Sultan of Brunei... ..94-96, 102, 108, 140, 156, 183, 185, 187, 190, 192, 197, 199, 201, 202, 263, 307, 308, 339, 342

Switzerland..... 148, 319, 320

Syden (ship)..... 30, 31, 33, 34

Sydney (ship)..... 65
 Sydney, Australia..... 148, 194

 Tabanan, Bali... 40, 51, 57, 58,
 62, 63
 Table Bay, South Africa..... 24
 Teazer (ship)..... 307, 308
 Tegora Mine.. 282, 283, 298-300,
 302, 303, 306, 307, 309, 310,
 317, 341
 Templer, Jem..... 93
 Templer, John... 3, 93, 111, 141,
 153, 155-157, 159, 161, 163,
 164, 172, 176, 177, 192, 202,
 260, 284
 Tichborne case..... 305
 Tidman, Paul.. 115, 120, 123-128,
 130-137, 138, 182, 183, 188,
 196-198, 210, 211, 222, 227,
 234, 241, 273, 281, 300, 319
 Timber trade.... 4, 97, 178, 190,
 213, 265, 271
 Tuan Muda.... 103, 242, 274, 279,
 281, 287, 292, 340, 342

 Udong, Cambodia.. 75-77, 79, 83,
 89
 United States.... 1, 64-72, 100,
 301, 311, 314, 315, 316, 320

 Varde, Denmark.... 7, 10, 11, 18,
 167, 334

 Venus (ship)... 36, 51, 52, 58,
 146
 Victoria (ship)..... 184, 188-192

 Wagner, Mr..... 290
 Walker, Reuben George See
 Brooke, George
 Wallace, Alfred Russel.... 108,
 310, 340, 344
 Walters, Mr... 276, 278, 279, 282
 Water Lily (ship)..... 138, 277
 Watson, W.C..... 171, 189, 244,
 278, 281
 Wellington, Richard.... 117, 118,
 120, 126
 Welstead, Captain and Mrs.... 201
 Welstead, Julia See Brooke,
 Julia née Welstead
 White Lackington, Somerset,
 England.. 164, 241, 251, 291, 293
 White Rajah of Sarawak... 1, 16.
 See also Brooke, Charles Anthoni
 Johnson, Sir; Brooke, Charles
 Vyner de Windt, Sir; Brooke,
 James, Sir
 White Sea..... 321, 322
 Wilson, Emma née Bruce.. 168, 180
 Woolley, Elizabeth. See Chambers,
 Elizabeth née Woolley

 Young, Brigham..... 316