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Conrad and Captain Marris: A Biographical Note

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DEDICATING A VOLUME to someone is usually an act of gratitude and a testimony to close friendship or is an act of homage that partakes of both of these. Conrad's dedications prove no exception to this rule with both his personal friends – Adolph Krieger, Fountaine and Nellie Hope, Ted Sanderson – and literary ones – Edward Garnett, John Galsworthy, H. G. Wells – so honoured. The outlier is the dedication to *'Twi'xt Land and Sea* (1912), which reads as follows:

To

CAPTAIN C. M. MARRIS

LATE MASTER AND OWNER
OF THE *ARABY MAID*: ARCHIPELAGO TRADER
IN MEMORY OF THOSE
OLD DAYS OF ADVENTURE

Students of Conrad have hitherto turned only somewhat limited attention, mainly in the form of footnotes to standard scholarship, to the man behind the name. He also passingly figures in Conrad's correspondence and is mentioned in one of Jessie Conrad's memoirs of her husband. As it turns out, there is more to discover about him, and even the bare facts in play to date need revised in light of records made recently accessible and research related to them.

Early Life

Following Marris's own statement in his first letter to Conrad of 18 July 1909, both the *A Portrait in Letters* and the Cambridge Edition's "Introduction" to *Twixt Land and Sea* account him a New Zealander: "My Parents ... returned from N.Z. of which colony I am a native" (Stape and Knowles, ed., 1996: 67).

Documentary evidence disproves this claim: Carl Murrell Marris was born in Aston, a ward of Birmingham, on 25 January 1875,¹ his father being Charles W(ilmot) Marris (1832–1914), a chartered accountant, and his mother, Jessie Sophia Euphemia (née Sinclair, 1852–1930).² Marris did, however, reside in New Zealand as a youngster; a family history notes that he moved there at age 8 with his parents.³ The *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* article on Marris's brother William (later Sir William) is more precise on this, stating that the family went to Wanganui when William was aged 11 – he was born 1873 – his father going out to the colony because of his health (Haig *DNB* online). Thus, the family arrived in 1884; and, given the birth of a girl in England in early 1887,⁴ their stay in the colony proved short-lived. Whether they all

¹ Jan–Mar 1875 Aston 6d/281. The exact date appears in Marris's Application for Examination for Second Mate where, however, the year is wrongly given as 1870. The birth of a son to Mrs Charles Marris at Preswick House, Sparkbrook, Warwickshire, is recorded on in "Births, Marriages, and Deaths" (*Pall Mall Gazette*, 27 January 1875). Marris was baptized at Holy Trinity Church, Bordsley, Warwickshire, on 17 February 1875 (Birmingham: Baptisms).

² The 1911 Census notes that they had eleven children; but Marris had been married twice previously. He married Marris's mother, the daughter of a physician, on 15 February 1872 at St Giles, Camberwell (Certificate of Marriage).

³ Emigration was certainly after 1881, the family being in the UK Census for that year. The elder Marris advertised his services in Wellington in 1884 as follows: "Charles Marris, Accountant and Auditor (for the last 18 years in Birmingham), now at Westminster Chambers, Lambton Quay (*Evening Post*, 15 December 1884: 4).

⁴ Elsie (Earle) Marris, daughter (aged 4), appears in the UK Census for 1891, her birthplace given as London (RG12/2463/77, p. 21). The 1901 Census gives her age as 14 and her birthplace as West Ham, Essex (RG13/2764/39, p. 3), this information being confirmed by the registration of her birth Jan–Mar 1887 W. Ham 4a/138.

returned together is, however, unclear, William almost certainly staying on; but any event, in 1889, Carl Marris was sailing out of Liverpool.⁵

The Career

The next ten years of Marris's life, from age fourteen to twenty-three, are well-documented, assuming his account to be accurate. On his application for his second mate's examination, which he took in Liverpool on 25 April 1898, he listed service in no fewer than fifteen ships, as follows:⁶

Ship	Kind	Rank	Port	Dates
<i>Letterewe</i>	Bk	Apprentice	Liverpool	Jun1889–Aug 1890 Deserted in Australia
<i>Ranelagh</i>	SS	AB	Brisbane	Aug–Sept 1890
<i>Yaralla</i>	SS	AB	Brisbane	Sept–Oct 1890
<i>Wodonga</i>	SS	AB	Sydney	Oct–Nov 1890
<i>Fitzroy</i>	SS	AB	Brisbane	Nov–Dec 1890
<i>Dovercourt</i>	Sch	OS	London	July 1891–Jan 1892
<i>L. Schepp</i>	Sh	AB	New York	Mar–Apr 1892
<i>Hilston</i>	Sh	AB	London	Apr 1892–Mar 1893
<i>England</i>	SS	AB	Liverpool	Mar–Apr 1893
<i>John O'Gaunt</i>	Bk	AB	Liverpool	Apr–July 1893 Deserted in Santos
<i>Carnegie</i>	Bk	AB	Liverpool	July 1893–Dec 1894
<i>Severn</i>	Aux	AB	Glasgow	Apr–July 1895
<i>Culdoon</i>	Bkt	AB	St John, NB	Apr–Nov 1895
<i>Durham</i>	Sh	AB	Liverpool	Nov 1895–Feb 1897
<i>Cupica</i>	Sh	AB	Liverpool	Apr 1897–Mar 1898

⁵ An obituary of Marris's brother, Sir William Sinclair Marris (1873–1945), a colonial administrator in India and educator, notes that the family went out shortly after their first son was born, but this is obviously inaccurate (*The Times*). It also notes that Sir William attended Wanganui Collegiate School. In any event, the Marris's were at some point settled in Wellington (see above footnote). William attended Canterbury College (now the University of Canterbury) in Christchurch, matriculating in 1890, having returned, like his brother, to the Antipodes.

⁶ Marris's application is dated 26 February 1897, but he did not take his examination until the following year. He provided some exact dates for commencement and termination of service on it; these are not recorded here.



Fig. 1 Carl Murrell Marris
(courtesy of William Leigh Knight)

According to family legend, Marris ran away to sea (Marris 2001: 21); his self-reported desertion in Australia tends to suggest, that he ran away once he got there, succumbing to the lure of the Antipodes. He surrendered to that again not long after receiving his second mate's certificate, in Liverpool on 28 April 1898, and returned to New Zealand. Australian shipping records document his having sailed out of Westport as second mate in the *Kate Tatum* and arriving in Sydney in October

1899 (Warner, comp.), a ship to which he still belonged in January 1900.⁷ His career at sea was a varied one, involving, service not only coasting off Australia and New Zealand but also service in ships out of or to Brazil, Canada, and the United States. Having been at sea for some years, he clearly had ambitions to improve his fortunes, and to this end studied at Mr Gifford's Navigation School in Grey Street, Wellington. He sat and passed his examination for first mate in the early spring of 1900 (*Evening Post* and *Otago Daily Times*),⁸ and not much more than a year later, on 7 June 1901, received his Master's certificate (Government of New Zealand: 1902: 14).

The bare facts lack colour; but, rather like Conrad's Lord Jim, Marris's life begins to take on something of a fictional character, at least as regards what has circulated about him and what might be guessed at as well as what he said about himself. Family history records his mention in 1909 of daughter by Wan Zaharah, Princess of Pattani, aged 8. Strictly speaking, that would mean – and it seems unlikely given the way in which people moved about at the time – that he had met his high-born wife in New Zealand and that his daughter was born in the colony.

The next sighting of him in records after his successful passing of his examination for master is in April 1903, when outbound from Wellington he is second officer in the *Janet Nicoll*,⁹ a ship with a mostly Malay crew. Sailing from Newcastle, New South Wales, to Penang with a cargo of 745 tons of coal, the ship departed on 17 April (*Sydney Evening News*) for its new home port. Purchased by a Penang firm that month, the ship was on her way to Penang and destined thereafter to travel between that port and Singapore.¹⁰ By this point Marris had, one

⁷ On 16 January, he reported the theft of his watch in Sydney (*New South Wales Police Gazette*).

⁸ See also Government of the United Kingdom, Board of Trade (BT 128).

⁹ List of Crew of the *Janet Nicoll* (4 April 1903, Wellington). Owned by Henderson and Macfarlane of Auckland, the *Janet Nicoll* was the schooner in which Robert Louis Stevenson and his family had travelled from Sydney to Samoa in 1890. Stevenson characterized her as "the worst roller I was ever aboard of" (to Sydney Colvin, [30 April 1890], Mehew, ed., 2001: 418). See also his wife's account, *The Cruise of the "Janet Nichol"* (1914).

¹⁰ Various Singapore newspapers from about 1906 indicate that the ship's round also included Bangkok.

presumes, definitively settled in Malaya; and, if his daughter's age is given correctly, he had been there from about 1901.¹¹

Meeting the Conrads

When Marris met Conrad in the late summer of 1909, the “soft-eyed black-bearded man” (*CL4* 331; see Fig. 1) who called on the Conrads at Aldington – was in ill-health,¹² his sojourn in England having been an attempt to find care better than that available in Penang.¹³ Jessie Conrad's recollection of what she calls his “never to be forgotten visit” has a certain poignancy: “A pathetic story lay behind his loss of memory, and helplessness. ... The partial paralysis that obscured his recollection, was the result of a collision in some Eastern river” (Conrad 1935: 137).¹⁴

After his return home to Pulo Tikus (now fully amalgamated into the city of Georgetown), he saw, he told Conrad, some improvement in his health (Stape and Knowles, ed. 1996: 70–71); this proved, however, to be short-lived. By his own account, in February 1910 he was confined, under magistrate's orders, in a hospital ward for the insane (Anon. “Pathetic Human Document”). Some time after this he again set out for England, making it only to Colombo, where he died on 15 May,¹⁵ as witnesses a memorial in the churchyard of St Peter's at Cookley, Worcestershire.

¹¹ The sale of the ship to the Koe Guam Shipping Company of Penang in March 1903 is noted in several Australian and New Zealand papers (see “Coastal Steamers” and “News of the Day”). On her future route between Penang and Singapore, see “News Items.”

¹² Further information about Marris is available from his application for his examination: he is described as 5 feet 9 inches tall, having a dark complexion and brown eyes and hair and tattoos on his arms.

¹³ Marris arrived at Southampton on 9 June 1909 (Incoming Passenger Lists) departed from that port on 15 September (Outgoing Passenger Lists), travelling third class on both voyages.

¹⁴ Marris's problems with his memory account perhaps for his claim in his first letter to Conrad that he had been out of England “22 years,” with his elision of his period in Liverpool and home ships.

¹⁵ The trip between the two ports, at a speed of 10 knots, takes five and a half days. It is unknown when Marris set out, and he might have been in Colombo (presumably at some point staying in hospital) some time before his death.

Man of Fact or Man of Fiction?

In January 1910, in his last letter to Conrad, Marris enclosed, in addition to a photograph of his daughter, his article in the *Straits Echo* (see Appendix). He was also at work on other sketches, claiming not to have “a great inventive faculty” (Stape and Knowles, ed. 1996: 72). Assessing this proves to be problematic: in his first letter to Conrad he claimed to have been born in New Zealand (not true) and not to have been in England for twenty-years (also not true). His account of adventures in the remote South Sea islands is difficult to square with his own account of his sea-career offered as proof of sufficient service to take his second mate’s examination. That document as well raises issues: on it his year of birth – in his own hand – is wrongly given (as 1870), having, moreover, signed the warrant that the document was true in this and other particulars. At the time of his application, he produced proofs testifying to only four years, eleven months, and seven days at sea for the total claimed period of seven years, two months, and eighteen days at sea. (Conrad himself was not strictly accurate about this matter when making his own applications to be examined.)

In his “Malayan Trading Experiences,” Marris claims to have spent three years in the Solomon Islands in the employ of the Sydney firm of Wilkins and Short. But when exactly could this have occurred? By his sworn account, 1889 finds him in Liverpool, aged 15. Thereafter, he served in Australian and British ships to 1898. In 1900–01, he is in Wellington; and after that he lived in Malaya, married and with a child. The only period where three years are available are between 12 and 15, but no firm would have hired a boy of 12 to run anything. The other possibility is that he lied about his service. Even then, no shipping concern named Wilkins and Short turns up in Australian newspapers.

None of this much matters to Conrad – in a direct way. Marris was clearly, however, a colourful man; and on his visit stirred up memories of the East and of seafaring days long passed. The rest is a partial and intriguing private story, only the contours of which can be glimpsed.

Acknowledgement

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Appendix

Malayan Trading Experiences

(Reminisced for the *Straits Echo*)

By C. M. Marris, F. R. G. S.¹⁶

The Straits Echo (Penang), 14 January 1910, pp. 25ff, 28ff

¹⁶ Marris’s election to a fellowship in the Royal Geographical Society dates from 1909 (Royal Geographical Society, 1910: 175). His address in the 1910 yearbook is given as Teluk Ayer Tawar, Provence Wellesley, Straits Settlements; and Cookley, Worcestershire. Teluk Ayer Tawar (Freshwater Bay) is a small town north of Butterworth, across the channel from Penang.

IT WAS in Timor Dilli, that it commenced, no not quite, for that was five years earlier at San Christoval, in the Solomons, when I accepted the offer made me by Wilkins and Short of Sydney to manage their trading station there. I was then only a youth, and it seemed a golden chance, and the terms were liberal too. After I had done three years there, I got tired of the life; the schooner only called once every six months and the natives were impossible, and hostile, thieving and treacherous; still on that last trip when the *Cecile* called for me, I had quite a respectable pile of copra for her. Then there was nothing left for me, but to go back to sea again; so after a month in Australia I sailed with Wilson, in the *Estelle*, the barque he bought on a reef off New Caledonia. We made a protracted cruise around the Java sea, and the Celebes, until finally in Makassar, when Wilson told me, for at least the twentieth time of his intention of going back to Sydney, and selling the vessel, and this time, actually followed up his statement by ordering some ballast he could sell 'down under,' I made up my mind to stay in the islands, and after some little trouble entailed in getting a substitute from Sourabaya he made up his mind to let me go. On the evening of the day on which the Java mailboat had arrived, bringing my successor, I watched from the beach the barque with topsails mastheaded and anchor apeak, awaiting the first whiffs of the land breeze. Having

seen her away, I went back to the hotel to think things over. I had decided on commencing trading again, not as before a salaried servant on an island station, a kind of primitive storekeeper; but my idea was to pick up a handy little vessel at a reasonable figure, and then make an extended trip, picking up what offered here and there, until with full hatches I could run into Singapore or Sourabaya, and dispose of it, at a respectable profit. I had the sum of £500 to my credit in the Union Bank of Sydney, and a circular letter of credit on business houses, all over the islands, and I calculated that this sum, judiciously expended on vessel, and trade goods, would be ample to establish me as a floating trader. I knew enough of the Archipelago to decide that it must be amongst the eastern groups of islands that my trading operations must be made, for in Borneo, Celebes, and the Moluccas, the Arabs were long established traders, and with them competition was scarcely possible for several reasons. Imprimis, the whole of the western islands, with one exception, were peopled by Mahomedans whilst the eastern groups either professed Christianity, or else the paganism of the Papuan races. In the second place Dutch who hold at least nominal sway over these parts, were kindly disposed toward them, whilst they looked on every European engaged in trafficing with natives, with suspicion. But in the eastern groups, where the Malayan element

merges into the Papuan, the Arabs had not yet penetrated and it was amongst these groups, unvisited save by an occasional Bugis proa, on their trips to or from the coasts of Northern Australia or New Guinea, or some European savant, naturalist, orchid hunter or anthropologist, that I hoped to earn a substantial return on my outlay. It was the same night in the Hotel Oranje, that I first heard about Campbell, and the *Araby Maid*. He had sailed for Dilli from Makassar, a month before, after trying in vain to sell the vessel there, that had become too small for him. Pierce of the *Sri Delima*, who spoke of him, said he expected he would be coming north to Makassar again, with a load of coffee from there, but advised me if I thought the vessel would suit me to run over to Dilli, if I could get a passage, and arrange matters there, adding that Campbell was anxious to sell, and that he thought I should get a bargain. By enquiries I made from an 'upas laut' on the front, I found out there was a Bugis 'pandewan' sailing the next day for Dilli, and thinking myself in luck, I took a sampan, and went out to her, as she was lying in the inner anchorage. Speaking Bugis fairly well I was well received by the 'juragan' and soon had made arrangements for a passage to Dilli, at a very reasonable charge. He said he would sail the next evening, and hoped to be in Timor within the week insh'Allah. Next day after tiffin, I squared up my accounts at the hotel, and had my baggage sent

on board, and having had a short talk with Gomez the hotel clerk, who hailed from Dilli, I went on board. It was the 'waktu sembayang lohor,' when I arrived, and I was surprised to notice the contrast between the Malay and Bugis, in the manner in which it was observed. Whereas, amongst our Malay crew, from the juru batu to the anak proa, the prescribed praying hours passed unnoticed, I found, on the pandewan, they were strictly kept, and that all hands went through the ceremonial prayers and prostrations, with devotion and humility. When the 'angin darat' made, the two large mat sails were hoisted on their triangular masts, and the heavy stone stocked anchor being tripped we moved gently down the harbour. When abreast of 'Karang Puteh,' the land breeze failed and became variable, and we were in some little danger of drifting on to the edge of the bank, and so the sweeps were requisitioned, but in half an hour, the breeze was fresh and steady again, and we ran out briskly through the Spermonde Passage until rounding the Tomissa reef we kept away and had cleared the Salayar Straits before daylight. For five days the Western monsoon wind held firm and fresh and on the sixth morning we saw the lofty Gunong Api ahead silhouetted against the rising sun, when we hauled up to weather Wetta, for the Ombay Passage. As the sun rose again, we passed in between the reefs, and rounding to, dropped anchor amongst a little fleet of nine

or ten other Celebes craft, which with the Portuguese guard ship, a Martha's Vineyard whaler in for wood and water, and the Ketch I was in quest of, formed the sole floating inhabitants of the little old world port. — I went at once on board the Ketch, and was warmly welcomed by her master who was surprised to see a European passenger landing from a 'pandewan.' After a long talk in which I told him of my intentions, and the object of my visiting Dilli, he told me to make the Ketch my home, until matters were arranged and then kindly sent his boat over to the proa for my baggage. I found her to be a very strongly built little vessel of sixty tons. Of somewhat heavy lines, her logbooks nevertheless credited her with some good sailing performances. I spent the afternoon examining her, aloft, and aloft, and mentally decided she would suit me very well for my purpose, if the price was approachable. In the evening we talked business, and before midnight, I was a ship owner and Campbell a richer man by £300. The next day, a blazing hot one, was spent in legal business, connected with the purchase and transfer, the greatest hitch being the change of her registry port from Sydney to Dilli, and the flag from British to Portuguese. This necessitated the consultation of endless ordinances, national and colonial, old and new, and it was really past office hours, when the last signature was attested to. Campbell himself left on the third day after my arrival, by the

mailboat for Java, where he hoped to arrive in time to pick up the Queensland mail. The following week in Dilli was a trying one, the town built on probably the most unhealthy site on the whole island, is about the worst place for fever, in the Archipelago, and I had a three day bout of it, that utterly knocked me up for the week. It is a most difficult place to get the smallest business matter done in, and at last I abandoned things I had intended doing, owing to the trouble they entailed. I made enquiries from Dom Ferrao, the pompous 'capitao di porto,' who in a resplendent gold laced uniform, gave me what knowledge he had of the Serawatty Island[s] and Timor Laut, which was nil. He had, however, a peon in the marine service who was a Tenimber native, whom he offered to exchange with one of my Malay crew, and the man being willing, this was effected. I found it a useful transfer for this man spoke Balinese, which one of my Javanese Malays understood so that by means of his interpretation, I was able to question him about Timor Laut. This was important, as I was about to send an indent to Europe for trade goods, and I wanted to order the right material for barter. After a month spent in Dilli during which I got things aboard fixed to my liking and had my fore cabin fitted out as a trade room, I sailed for Pantai Barat in the Island of Bali, going south about. I had a long beat of twenty eight days before I arrived there, having on three occasions been near to end-

ing the enterprise on which as yet, I had scarcely embarked, twice through being horsed into the narrow guts between the islands, where an eight knot tide races through, and once by reason of a proa, whose looks I did not fancy, coming out of Reo Bay, that caused me to run back, goose winged, about fifty miles over my tracks. I bought a hundred bags of rice in Pantai Barat which I should not have done, had I had more knowledge of the places I was going to, where I afterwards found sago was greatly used in its place. I came back to Timor via Flores Straits, drifting broadside through them in a tide, and again anchored in Dilli about an hour before the mail boat bringing my trade goods arrived. Looking over a copy of the invoice pasted inside the cover of my sailing directory, I find on this trip I left Dilli with trade stuff to the value of \$1070 excluding the rice, prices here mentioned have been converted into the present Straits currency. The nature of it may be classified as follows:—
Provender, Rice and Gin:—
Armament, Towermuskets, coarse black powder, caps and musket ball, Hardware, cooking pots, coarse cutlery, rod iron 3" x 1/2" and brass wire, fancy goods: Beads, red and blue, mirrors and toys, Textile fabrics:— Manchester goods:— Grey twill sheetings, red turkey cloth, coarse blue calico, and fine white calico. I also had twelve 1 gross crates of assorted empty bottles. The goods were all of English manufacture altho', necessarily,

of the cheapest description. In addition to this lot, the day before sailing, I bought by auction, the bankrupt stock of an Indian hawker, who had a shop in Dilli, the nature of which is too varied to be described, but of much the same description as the wares displayed by the kaki lima vendors of Penang.

On November 8th we sailed for the Serawatty Islands, dipping our new Portuguese ensign to the guard ship as we passed under her stern. It was beautiful weather outside, and the monsoon about west north west and blowing away merrily. We sped along the coast to the eastward leaving Pulo Kambing and Wetta on our port hand, and at daylight next morning we had the east point of Timor abeam and taking my departure from Pulo Jackee, at three o'clock in the afternoon, we anchored inside the four islands that encircle Luan, the safest anchorage in the group. As soon as we anchored six boats came off, containing, as I suppose, all the male inhabitants of the village. They had some bundles of trepang, and bird's nests with them, but no large supply, neither on examination did the trepang appear well cured, but we bought what they had for two bottles of gin, and some blue calico. The bird's nests seemed to be of the best white variety, and they would take nothing in exchange for them but cloth, and cutlery for which we

traded at the equivalent rate of \$30 a catty. The natives appeared friendly, and well intentioned, and one who appeared to be their chief, spoke a little Malay. He seemed very surprised at our visit and could not understand our flag, for although only sixty miles from the Portuguese territory none of them had seen the flag before, the only ensigns they knew being the Dutch and the English. Through my Tenimber man, I found they had no further stock ashore for barter but they promised to have a good supply collected, if I came back in a moon's time, which I promised to do, although I knew that a beat back against the strength the monsoon would then have was more than I wanted. Not thinking it prudent to stay here over nightfall we hoisted up, and stood away for Timor Laut, under easy sail, as I did not want to bring up again before daylight.

Timor Laut Besar, the principal and largest island of the group, is known to the natives by the name of Yamdenna. It is about ninety miles in length and from twenty to thirty across, at its widest part. We anchored in twelve fathoms of water, under a little island named Loro, at the head of the small bay, in which the village of Oliliet is built and where we were well sheltered from the monsoon. As in the Serawatty Islands the native boats soon came off. They use long 40 feet outrigger boats, of somewhat the same style as the Ceylon catamarans excepting that these had outriggers on each side. They

are of a much lighter colour than the Luan people, and this lightness was accentuated by their habit of bleaching their naturally black hair to a light flaxen hue. This they do by plastering it over with a paste made, I think, of burnt shell lime and coconut ash. The roots generally remaining black, gives them a somewhat ludicrous appearance. They wear it long, and gathered in knobs on the top of their head. Their clothing was the chawat of coarse imported cloth. The beach is lined to the foot of the cliffs, about three furlongs inland, by a grove of coconut trees, and their village was built on the top of the cliff. The houses, from the ship, appeared neatly and well built, and had more of the Burmese than the Malayan style of architecture. I allowed three boats crews to come alongside at a time. This precaution was necessary. The Ketch being low, could be easily boarded. The natives were all armed with bows, and arrows, which carried in a bamboo segment, were four feet long and headed with broken glass, or hoop iron. Their head man came off in a large well built boat flying the Dutch flag. He carried an eight foot long ebony staff with a brass or gold knob, on which was engraved the royal arms of Holland and wore over his otherwise almost naked body, a broad leathern belt centred by an oval brass plate inscribed Residentie van Banda. He spoke Malay fairly well, and lost no time in asking me for present one bottle laru, which I instinctively

and correctly guessed, was the native word for gin. Thinking it politic, and that it would facilitate trade, I gave him a bottle, a few small trinkets, and a dozen glass marbles, with which he was delighted. Then, in an evil moment, I invited him to look at the trade room. Once there, he fancied so many things, that it was with difficulty he could be led on deck again. By noon the Ketch was surrounded by boats, laden with dammar, tortoiseshell and tripang, and my mate and myself, spent a busy afternoon, weighing out, and bartering. We gave in exchange, brass wire, bottles, and blue calico, and disregarded their continued demands for gin, and gunpowder. A pikul of copra was afterwards bought for a Tower gun, and a catty of powder. The old chief stayed on board all day directing his people in their dealings, and settling all the minor disputes that arose. The Dilli harbour master's boatman now proved very useful as an interpreter, for altho a native of Laarat, the eastern island, he had a fair use of the dialect. The old man spoke of two Europeans who had visited the place three years previously, and by his pointing to the Dutch flag, I understood him to mean that they were of that nation. I spent the evening in trying to pick up a few words of the language, but it was slow work, the only words that I found the same as Malay were the names for gold, pig, salt, and wax and the numerals, five, six, and one hundred.

The old chief, whose name was Lumbuku was the last of the islanders to go ashore. It was just after sunset that I saw him depart, hugging his 'laru' and an old straw hat full of trashy trifles I had given him for his women and children. I had given him my promise to visit his village, before I left the next day, and he assured me of the arrival of some more goods from the other islands, during the night. I set a particularly close watch that night, and slept but very little myself being worried by some small biting insects, resembling sand flies that came off shore with the land breeze. I tried to calculate from the trade book, the value of the stuff we had given away, balancing it against the marketable value of the goods we had received. This was very satisfactory, but I was a little worried at not being able to sell some rice, but I hoped to do this in the next group and reflected I could always run into one of the Western ports, and try to get rid of it at some small profit. Nothing worth recording happened during the night, and the dawn broke brightly. By the time the sun was a hand's breadth above the horizon, the boats came off, some being new arrivals from Laarat, the natives being of much the same description as those of Yamdenna. They seemed somewhat neater in appearance, and wore sarongs to the knee, ornamented with sewn on strings of small cowrie shells. They brought us trepang and pearl shell, and small supplies of other things all of

which we purchased, I making the trade and weighing out, whilst my mate, a better clerk than seaman, made careful entries of weights and barter in the trade book:— We gave them mostly cutlery, and iron, and some blue calico, which they use greatly for flag making, the island flag being a blue square with white border. As before, they wished for powder and shot, as there was a small tribal war being carried on at intervals between some of the islands. When the trade was completed, and most of the boats sent away, I thought I would have a look at the village, although the climb looked a tiring one. I have never seen any description of the place, beyond the scanty notice of it in the ‘*Oriental Navigator*.’ Taking three hands in the boat, and leaving the mate with the others to clear up, and prepare for sea, and giving orders that no more boats were to be allowed alongside, I pulled away for the white sand beach, landing at the place I had noticed the natives make for. The water was very clear, and I plainly saw bottom in ten fathoms. My mate told me afterwards he saw the anchor lying on the bottom, before heaving it up. Lumbuku had evidently been informed of my landing, for as the boat’s forefoot took the shelving beach, he emerged from the forest belt and came forward to welcome me. We followed a sinuous track leading inland through the grove of coconuts, to the base of the red sandstone cliff, on which the village is built. The trees were

prolific, and heavy with fruit, but the grove wanted thinning out, the intermingled fronds overhead, making it quite dark beneath. At the base of the cliff there were a few steps, roughly hewn in the rock after which the ascent was made by means of ladders which, made of some hard red wood, in long lengths, were strongly bound together with rattan. I found the climb trying and laborious. On the way up we passed many holes from which the edible birds nests were collected. Lumbuku preceded me, and behind me came a crowd of island youths following out of curiosity. On reaching the top of the cliff, a curious sight presented itself. About fifty feet away from what I will call the landing place, was an arched bamboo gateway, from which a pallsade of bamboo ranjan led away on each side, encircling the village, the one entrance into this stockaded village being through the archway. We passed inside, and I found immediately in front of us a small square, in the centre of which appeared some kind of pillar or obelisk; stepping up to it, I found it to be a granite pedestal five feet high, of the description of those found carrying sundials in old gardens. On the top was fastened an iron plate, which, rusted through in two places, barely allowed the Dutch arms, and the words *Netherlands India* to be deciphered. From the north and south sides of the square a street led away, lined on each side with well built houses. The houses were

built on piles, quite eight feet from the ground, and had steep roofs, and high eaves, ornamented with carved wooden horns, which in their turn were adorned with chaplets of shell. The houses were entered by a ladder which instead of leading to the door led to a trap-door in the floor, about the centre of the house, which, when closed and the ladder removed, rendered the house secure against entrance. The streets were about twelve feet wide and cleanly swept. I should estimate the total number of houses to be 200 and the population 1,000. Lumbuku's house was at the further end of the south road, a little larger than its fellows, and having before it a long bamboo, on which the Dutch flag was flying. It appeared his sole official function was the hoisting of the flag, during the stay of a vessel in port. By the time we reached his house, we had a following of quite fifty, who dispersed, on a word from the old man. I noticed among them three Albinos, a large proportion for so small a community, and found out afterwards that they were brothers, which may account for it. Their curious appearance is worth noting; their skin was perfectly white, excepting some brown blotches on the shoulders. The hair was also white, and stiff and coarse, and their eyes were a clear green, which gave them a most uncanny appearance. I saw a few women, coming in with water jars from the village supply, a spring in thick jungle at the back of the village. They were not un-

comely, and of upright carriage, which I attribute to the portage of heavy water jars on their heads. The interior of the house was somewhat dull, consisting of one large room and a screened off dapor. It was quite devoid of furniture, except some rough log stools, and a bamboo couch. Some bows and spears hung from the surrounding walls and were carved and ornamented with tufts of dyed hair. I saw a few articles of European manufacture, ranged on a shelf above where I sat. One object wedged in behind a rafter, I pulled out and found to be the green cloth cover of a Dutch 'Life of Napoleon'. A name too faded to be deciphered was on the inside of the cover, and the date 1844. The nibong flooring was covered with clean pandan mats. I talked for an hour with Lumbuku, and tried to glean something of the past history of the place and of the vessels that had called there, and some of their legends and folklore, but it was unsatisfactory, and the little he told me appeared to be fable; they seemed to have no records, beliefs, or religion. His earliest recollection was of a Dutch war ship coming, during his father Lomba's seigniory, and the erection of the pedestal. Fruit, and sweetmeats were brought in by some of his women, who had retired to the next building on our advent. I thought the two who came in were quite good looking, even judged from a European standard. They wore the Malay dress, and had simple devices tattooed on fore-

head, and left cheek. This is a tribal mark, and is done with fishbones and a pigment of burnt coconut ash, during their childhood. There are eight other villages on Yamdenna, but I only remember the name of one, Teppa, which is on the West Coast. I left them a few beads that I had pocketed before going ashore, and Lumbuku escorted me back to the beach. I found the downward climb very tiring, and the cliff I believe is over four hundred feet high. Lumbuku gave the necessary orders to his boatmen and shortly afterwards followed me in his canoe. I made him a parting present of three coloured handkerchiefs, and another bottle of gin, and told him I was sailing for Pulo Aru. He pointed out a boat coming off from the beach, which when it came alongside I found to contain a store of green nuts, fruit and fish and a young pig. This was the old man's present. On receiving my thanks he made his adieux and hurried off anxious I believe to reach his cliffy eyry, in time to dip his flag to us as we weighed. An hour later we made sail, and Portugal saluted Holland. In the trade book I kept I find the entries relating to Timor Laut to be:—

30 catties of tripang at the equivalent rate of 6 cts per catty

18 catties of tortoiseshell at rate of \$2 per catty

4 pkl. of pearl shell (inferior) at rate of \$14 per pkl.

60 cats. Shark fins at 30 cts. a catty

11 cats W. Birdnests @ £22 a catty

8 pkls. of rattans @ \$2:— Also camphor, Benzoin, Dragon's Blood, Massoi bark and Ambergris in small quantities. The average profit on the whole at the then ruling market prices I judged to be about 75%. The Union Bank of Sydney, had been paying me three and a quarter per cent.

Our course for the Aru Group was about N.E. and the distance to Dobbo, the trading port, about 160 miles. When we had got a fair offing, the westerly monsoon grew lighter and lighter, until by midnight we were lying in a flat calm with a long swell coming down from the north west, which caused the Ketch to roll a great deal more than was pleasant. The breeze came again with the dawn, and after sunrise we sighted the coast of Tanah Besar, and hauling northerly, picked up Pulo Babi before dark. We anchored under this island for the night, the survey of this group not being sufficiently good for night navigation. Heaving up next morning, we anchored to leeward of the long spit on which the town is built. The town, for there are more shops and trading stores than private dwellings, is built on a narrow sandy peninsula on the northern coast of the island of Wamma. The buildings, which occupy the whole space from beach to beach, with narrow lanes between, are large attap sheds, one part of which is used as dwelling and the rest as a godown. The traders were a mixture from all the

islands, principally Ceramese and Bugis. The islanders, a pure Papuan race, lived on the southern, or shore end of the spit. There were about a dozen proas lying on either side of the point, but I heard that many more were shortly expected. Several boats manned by Arus came off, bringing fruit, and some provisions, but nothing to trade with. They all seemed to speak some Malay, and I soon learned that all trading was done on shore. I had no scruples about going on shore in this place, as it was too old a mart, and the people too civilized by trade, to fear an attempt at cutting out. There were several well-built plank boats lying or hauled up on the beach, some of which had been brought over from the Kü Is. for sale: I was surprised by the cosmopolitan population, Bugis, Javanese and men from the Moluccas and Ceram, mingled together in trade, and some Chinese traders I found shopkeeping. In addition to this, there were blendings of all these races with the Aru. It was amazing to find the very cheap prices at which almost any European article could be purchased, and after an hour ashore I came to the conclusion that it would not be a profitable deal we should do here. However, through the good offices of a Bugis trader, and a small honorarium, I rented a small but good house, and kept my boat busy during the next two days in transshipping most of my trade stuff. On the third day when I was ready to open shop, I had quite a gathering of natives loaded with

samples, to trade with me. They brought tripang and pearl shell chiefly, and massoi bark and shark fins, but no bird's nests. Birds of paradise were offered me and skins, but I did not know anything of their trade value, and would not deal. The island is, I think, not more than twenty feet above sea level, but being covered with high jungle, and the beaches being fringed tall casuarina trees, from which I suppose the group takes its name, gives one at first quite a different opinion. We were able here to dispose of some of our rice to the traders, but at a very small profit. The Orang Kaya, as in Olliet, carried an ebony staff but with a silver instead of a gold head. He told me there were the remains of an old Dutch fort, about three miles along the beach to the westward. December set in with fresh monsoon and frequent rain squalls, which hindered the drying of copra and trepang. I, on shore with half my crew, was kept busy daily, sorting and testing the qualities of our purchases. My mate and his half was occupied in boating off, and painting the ship. In this month, there were new arrivals daily, from Makassar and the Moluccas, and consequently prices were on the increase. I had now made a large gap in my trade stuffs, and wishing to visit the Kü Is. before going west, I arranged to sail .on Christmas Day. It took us five days to beat to the westward and it was on New Year's Eve when we anchored off the village of Ku Ili in Great Ku Island. This

island is about forty-five miles long and I think quite 3000 feet high. The natives are purely a Papuan race, with long mop hair, and as black as it is possible to imagine. When we anchored, they came alongside in their boats, shouting and singing, and appeared a very noisy lot of savages. The principal industry of the island is boat building, and they are very skilled at it, and turn out some beautiful plank boats that are met with all over the archipelago. They get their planks from some beautiful timber that grows all over the island and somewhat resembles teak. The boats are all built under Kajangs, on the shingle beach, and of any size up to 50 tons. The planks are carefully and neatly fitted, the fastening being pegs and seizings of rattan. No nails are used in their construction. I could not help thinking, considering the high price of teak, that this timber which the natives here call badu, should at some future time prove to be a valuable export. Another industry is the manufacture of coconut oil, from the forests of this tree that line the beach, around the larger

island. Copra they do not make, only oil, which we bought at the rate of \$2 per pkl. In the week we stayed there we gathered 40 pikuls of oil, about the same weight of trepang, some pearl shell and rattans, and a small quantity of other produce. We had now finished our trade goods and had only a dozen bags of rice left. On January 12th, after a two months successful trip, we battened down, and sailed for Sourabaya, a run of some 1,300 miles in a direct line, but something like two thousand on the course the monsoon compelled us to take. We went through Pitt and Molucca Passages, and along the north coast of Celebes, and with many anchorings, down through Makassar Straits. On March 6th we anchored about three quarters of a mile north of the entrance to Sourabaya River.

The cargo was all sold there, and after paying all expenses of the trip, including food, wages and dues, there remained a clear profit of \$2,760.

[*Suda Habis*]