

under the window on the floor was her silver tea-set. Ann sat down before it and gathered it into her arms as if it were a child. The tears ran down her cheeks. "To think," she kept saying, "to think he fetched it back. Only to think on't!" And while she sat there, very happy with the tea-set in her lap, she heard a step she knew. She came swiftly to her feet. Then she put the silver on her bureau in a shining row, and questioned her face in the glass. The tears were on it still, but that hardly mattered on a face that smiled so hard. But she did wipe away the drops with her apron, and then hurried into the kitchen to meet her visitor. Mrs. John C. was bedraggled from loss of sleep, and defeat sat upon her shining brow.

"Well, Ann," she said, gloomily, "I ain't got any news for ye. He wa'n't there, arter all, though there'd been a fire an' they found he cooked himself some eggs. But they're goin' to beat up the woods arter breakfast, an' if he's above ground he's goin' to be found."

Ann could scarcely sober her smiling mouth.

"You tell 'em it's all right," she announced, jubilantly. "Where do you s'pose I found it? In my bedroom, arter all."

Mrs. John C. regarded her with blighting incredulity. Ann had been guiltily careless, and yet she expressed no grief over the trouble she had made. It was beyond belief.

"Ann Barstow," said she, "you don't mean to tell me you had this whole township up traipsin' the woods all night, an' me without a wink o' sleep, an' that tea-set in your bedroom, arter all?"

Ann did flush guiltily. Her eyes fell.

"You beseech 'em not to think hard of me," she urged. "I never do put it in my bedroom—you know yourself them two places I keep it in—but there 'twas."

Mrs. John C. turned majestically to be gone. She spoke with an emphasis that seemed, even to her, inadequate.

"Well, Ann Barstow, I should think you was losin' your mind."

"Mebbe I be," said Ann, joyously, following her to the door. "Mebbe I be. But there's my tea-set. I'm terrible pleased."

Offering

BY BERTHA G. CROZIER

DEAR Lord, I come to Thee with empty hands,—
No gift I bring.
So busy was I, that there seemed no time
For garnering.

To one athirst beside me, Lord, I gave
The cup I bore.
And to a weary comrade lent the strength
He needed sore.

A little, tender child, in tears, afraid,
Clung close to me,
And him I carried. So, to glean, my hands
Were never free.

Dear Lord, ashamed, I hide my face! I came
'Through golden lands;
And yet, at last, can only offer Thee
My weary hands!

The Last of a Great Sultan

BY POULTNEY BIGELOW

IT is a solemn thing to have an audience with such as have power of life and death—especially in states where the habeas corpus passes for political poison. This thought went through me as I sat in the presence of His Imperial Highness Sri Paduka Bawa Duli Sultan Hashim Jalil-Ul-Alam Akamadin Ibni Almerhum Sri Paduka Manlana Sultan Omar Ali Saijudin, the twenty-fifth of his illustrious dynasty in Brunei.

I may not have got in all his titles—he is a modest man. But for these few I have official authority no less than that of H. B. M. Acting Consul at Brunei, a Scot after my own heart—fond of speculating on cause and effect.

There was room for speculation, for my seat had been placed on the Sultan's right, immediately in front of a long brass smooth-bore muzzle-loading piece of artillery, behind which piece stood a brown gentleman with a turban on his head and a torch in his hand—said torch being occasionally used for the lighting of cigars. It would not have been etiquette to have asked whether the brass piece was or was not loaded.

But maybe I am going ahead too fast. Perhaps you have never been to Brunei—perhaps you do not know that the Sultan of Brunei is the hereditary Sultan, not merely of all Borneo and the bulk of the present Malay Archipelago, but that his ships dominated the Strait of Malacca, and that the southern states of China once sent him tribute.

To-day he stoutly claims dominion over several islands of the Philippine group—notably those which profess the faith of Islam.

The Sultan of Brunei is eighty-three years of age—at least so he told me. And while he stoops as he walks, he makes the appearance rather of a temporary invalid than of an old man. He seemed pleased when I told him that he might pass for sixty; and indeed he might, for his face

is singularly free from wrinkles. His expression of benevolence suggests the late Leo XIII.—his smile is engaging, albeit tinged with sadness.

His house was ruling when the Roman Empire had hardly ceased to crumble. His ancestors gave the law to a vast Eastern Empire when Europe was but a patchwork of barbarous chiefs; and when, after centuries, Spanish and Portuguese found their way to the Spice Islands they laid propitiating gifts at the feet of the Borneo Sultan—as vassals, humbly begging the right to live within his dominions.

Brunei is still the metropolis of native Borneo—indeed the name Borneo is but a corruption of Brunei,—yet few maps show the existence of this empire. It is Venice in Borneo—a city whose streets are water, whose citizens are born in houses perched on slender piles, whose in and out going is the affair not of side-walks, but of single-bladed paddles; where even the market is held afloat in the “Grand Canal,” where the shops are propelled through a fleet of prospective customers. Imagine a Henley week—innumerable small craft; dugout canoes, anywhere from a tiny water “perambulator” little larger than a cradle, through the successive sizes capable of holding a full-grown man—a dozen men,—to the covered-over barges of state which correspond to those of early Venice.

House-boats there are also at Brunei; but they have a commercial character, are mainly owned by Chinese, who fit them up as floating stores with show-cases and shelves on both sides—doors wide open. At bow and stern are Malay paddlers, while the proprietor sits at his side entrance offering his wares to the crowd of jostling canoeists, who handle their craft (we must be just) with infinitely more grace and good humor than the bulk of our aquatic brethren of Henley or even of the Adirondacks.