

of this vessel, great exposure was necessary to effect this survey, I found both officers and men cheerful and willing. The parties were organized,—the first to proceed to the north, towards Balabac Island, to survey the intermediate shoals and reefs, under Lieutenant Emmons and Mr. Totten; the second to the south, under Lieutenants Perry and Budd; and Mr. Hammersly for the survey of the shoals of Balambangan and Banguay, and their reefs. The examination of the Mangsee Islands, and the reefs adjacent, with the astronomical and magnetic observations, &c., devolved on myself and those who remained on board the ship.

The weather was watched with anxiety, and turned out disagreeable, heavy showers and strong winds prevailing; notwithstanding, the boats were despatched, after being as well protected against it as possible. We flattered ourselves that these extensive reefs would produce a fine harvest of shells; but, although every exertion was made in the search, we did not add as many to our collections as we anticipated. Some land-shells, however, were found that we little expected to meet with, for many of the trees were covered with them, and on cutting them down, large quantities were easily obtained. Mr. Peale shot several birds, among which was a Nicobar pigeon; some interesting plants and corals were also added. On the island a large quantity of drift-wood was found, which with that which is growing affords ample supplies of fuel for ships. No fresh water is to be had, except by digging, the island being but a few feet above high-water mark.

Although the time was somewhat unfavourable, Lieutenant Emmons and party executed their orders within the time designated, and met with no other obstructions than the inclemency of the weather. This was not, however, the case with Lieutenant Perry, who, near a small beach on the island of Balambangan, encountered some Sooloos, who were disposed to attack him. The natives, no doubt, were under the impression that the boats were from some shipwrecked vessel. They were all well armed, and apparently prepared to take advantage of the party if possible; but, by the prudence and forbearance of this officer, collision was avoided, and his party saved from an attack.

The island of Balambangan was through the instrumentality of Mr. Dalrymple, as heretofore stated, obtained from the Sooloos for a settlement and place of deposit, by the East India Company, who took possession of it in 1773. Its situation off the northern end of Borneo, near the fertile district of that island, its central position, and its two fine ports, offered great advantages for commerce, and for its becoming a great entrepôt for the riches of this archipelago.