

**Written across:** I am going to send an account of one of my explorations to the Sydney M. Herald so keep a lookout for it.<sup>i</sup>

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J.M.J

Thaiping, Perak  
17.9.84.

My dear Sir William,

You have been a very long time answering my letter but I am determined not to follow your example. "Better late than never" was my joyful exclamation at seeing your well known neat handwriting. I was much pleased to see also yr article on poor old Sir John O'S<sup>ii</sup> of worthy memory. Victoria in general and the Catholic Ch. won't see his like again in a hurry. I congratulate you on your literary success<sup>iii</sup> and let me also congratulate you on the honour which Leo XIII<sup>iv</sup> has been pleased to confer upon you.

I hope Mrs. Archer and Gracie are well. G. must be a big girl now. How I long to see you all again. I am almost tempted to say that I will return per P & O via Ceylon. K. Geo Sound and Melbourne but in these days of wars<sup>v</sup> and rumours of wars I scarcely like to promise. I wanted to return via Hong Kong, Canton, Shanghai, Japan and California, but the war has put that out of the question. In fact I can't get a passage to Canton now as some of the steamers have been fired on. Still I mean to try and will get to H. Kong at least. One can get a return ticket for £30 from Singapore so it wd be hard to come so far and leave without seeing a little of the Flowery Land. In any case I leave Perak the day after tomorrow and am returning to S'pore by Selangore, Sungei, Ujong and Malacca.

I have been now 12 months in the M. Peninsula and have travelled and explored to an extent which I can't tell you in a letter but which may, please God, form the subject of many an evening chat between us by and by. I am none the worse for my long stay in this climate. I had a little fever and ague lately but soon shook it off. I am a little thinner, that is all; but it is not an evil, is it? I have amassed a good many materials interesting to science which I hope to publish.

I have been in places where no European ever trod before and was for long periods at a time amongst the Malays so just fancy! I have had to learn to speak their language and make not a bad scholar at it now — so I say at least but then I am naturally prejudiced. It is a very easy language but not worth learning except as a means of communication in the Indian Archipelago and there it is indispensable. As for the Malays themselves I have found them most interesting and have come to like them exceedingly. I have often and often had to trust my life and safety in their hands and never have had reason to regret it.

I daresay you heard that Fr. Scortechini,<sup>vi</sup> the Italian priest and botanist, was with me for the last 6 months. A few days ago he narrowly escaped being killed by a tiger. It carried off a Malay and killed a dog close by the side of Fr. S. under our very eyes I might almost say. It made us rather careful I can assure you. I daresay my dear old friend that you say to yourself I wonder what can have taken Fr. Julian to those outlandish perilous and unhealthy regions at his time of life. Well love of science has something to do with it and love of travelling and adventure sure, but these are not exactly things for a middle-aged priest to be influenced by. I daresay too I had grown rather weary of trying to do good in another way in the face of so much unkindness, hard usage and is it too much to say envy

and bitterness? But enough of that. When I get back to Australia, if ever I do, I shall live very quietly indeed so that no one shall feel me a stumbling block. Perhaps I should not have said so much to anyone else and after all complaints are in vain in a world where it is our duty to expect no reward.

I suppose you heard that Sir F. Weld<sup>vii</sup> is away on leave since March and so is Sir Hugh Low.<sup>viii</sup> But I have received even more kindness (if that were possible) from H. Ex. the Acting Govr. Clementi-Smith.<sup>ix</sup> Indeed I have met with kindness everywhere and a hospitality amongst the officers both military and civil which none but those who see it would ever realise. I have made many friends too and leave the Straits Settlements with much regret. I wd like to hear from you but can scarcely give you any sure address except Govt. House Singapore. I will send you anything I publish. Did you see my letters in *Nature*.<sup>x</sup>

Kindest regards. God bless you all.

Yrs most try in J.M.J.

Fr. Julian

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<sup>i</sup> "An Exploration in Perak" 7 letters. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 28th February to 23rd March.

<sup>ii</sup> Sir John O'Shanassy (1818-1883), an Irishman who migrated to Melbourne in 1839, was three times Premier of Victoria. In the 1850s he championed the miners' cause and throughout his long public career he fought to retain state aid for religion and denominational education. He was created a Knight of the Order of St. Gregory the Great by Pope Pius IX in 1866 and K.C.M.G. in 1874. He supported Federation and as the leading Catholic layman of Melbourne for many years he endeavoured to lead his co-religionists (many of them Irish) away from the antagonisms of the old world by stressing that they were Australians. (A.D.B., Vol. 5, pp. 378-382)

<sup>iii</sup> W.H. Archer, "Sir John O'Shanassy; a sketch", *Melbourne Review*, 8, 1882 and *Argus*, 7 May, 1883 and William Henry Archer, *Noctes Catholicae. The Position of Catholics in Victoria in relation to Public Education*. George Robertson Company Limited, Melbourne, Sydney and Adelaide, 1884.

<sup>iv</sup> In 1870, Archer had received the papal decoration of Gregory the Great and in 1884 was made Knight Commander of the Order of Pio Nino. (General Introductory Note to W. Archer Papers, University of Melbourne Archives).

<sup>v</sup> This was Sino-French War (1883-85), the conflict between China and France over Vietnam. In the final stages of the war, Chang Chih-tung, commander of the land forces, was successful against the French forces that had attempted to advance north into South China, but at sea the new Chinese fleet of eleven steamers was destroyed as was the great Foochow shipyard. A peace treaty was signed in Paris in 1885. (*Encyclopaedia Britannica Micropaedia*, p. 231.)

<sup>vi</sup> Rev. Benedict Scortechini, LLB., FLS, etc., an Italian priest came to Queensland in the early 1870s. He was stationed at Stanthorpe, Gympie, Roma and served in the Logan district (1875-1884). In his numerous missionary journeys he devoted time with considerable success to the study of Botany. He collaborated with T.M. Bailey (Colonial Botanist, Queensland) and Baron F. von Mueller of Victoria, and on various expeditions many new species were discovered. His work on fungi was noteworthy and a genus, *Scortechinia*, was named for him. He enthusiastically supported the formation of the Royal Society of Queensland and in 1884 journeyed to the Straits Settlement to work with Woods. After completing his study of the plants of the area, he planned to go to Kew with his collection and publish, with the aid of Dr. King of Calcutta, a Flora of the Straits Settlement. However, he died in the Calcutta district on 4th November, 1886. (*Proceedings of the Royal Society of Queensland*, Vol. 1887, pp. 2-8; Father T.J. Linane - private correspondence.)

<sup>vii</sup> Sir Frederick Weld (1823-1891), an Englishman, was a successful grazier, explorer, a champion of Maori rights and one time premier of New Zealand. On his return to England he was, in 1868, appointed Governor of Western Australia and then served as Governor of Tasmania (1875 - 1880) and Governor of the Straits Settlement and Singapore (1880-1887). A friend of Julian's, he invited him to explore and furnish a geologist's report on the mineral resources of the various Malaysian States. (Margaret Press, *op. cit.*, pp. 95-96, 144, 171 and A.D.B., Vol. 6, pp. 377-379)

<sup>viii</sup> Sir Hugh Low (1824-1905) after an uneventful thirty years as a colonial civil servant in Labuan, a small island off the north west coast of Borneo, was in 1877 appointed resident of Perak (now a state of West Malaysia). In his twelve years in Perak, Low was so successful in his administration that his methods became models for subsequent colonial operations in Malaya. He also enjoyed a reputation as a naturalist. (*Encyclopaedia Britannica Micropaedia*, p.1974).

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<sup>ix</sup> Sir Cecil Clementi-Smith, British Colonial Administrator (1840- 1916).

<sup>x</sup> . "The Geology of the Malayan Peninsula". *Nature*, 22 May, 1884, p.186 and "Physical Geography of the Malayan Peninsula" *Nature*, 18 December, 1884, pp. 152-154.