

ON THE RESOURCES OF THAT PART OF THE MALAYAN PENINSULA COMPRISING THE TERRITORY OF RUMBOW AND THE ADJACENT SMALL STATES, CEDED TO THE DUTCH GOVERNMENT OF MALACCA, BY TREATY WITH THE SULTAN OF JOHORE IN 1759.

(From a Correspondent.)

Before proceeding to state the natural productions of this part of the Malayan Peninsula, it will be necessary to revert to the different Governments, to which it has been subjected since the first establishment of an European Power on its Coast, and as the views of the present Government of Bengal appear to be directed to the development of the resources of the Countries lying to the Eastward of their possessions in Bengal, which have heretofore been neglected, it is to be hoped that only a short time will elapse before something will be done to bring to light the valuable productions now lying dormant, and

which, to their probable extent are almost unknown.

The first establishment of an European power at Malacca took place in the year 1511, during the reign of Sultan ABDUL JALIL of Johore, to whom it was subject, when the city was besieged and taken by the Portuguese, by whom it was retained until taken by the Dutch in 1641. From this period until 1759, no understanding existed between the Sultan of Johore & the Dutch, owing to the commercial importance attached to the place by the Sultan, who, possessing immense resources, entertained hopes of being able to regain possession of the city by the expulsion of the Dutch from his territories; and under this impression he would listen to no overtures of an amicable nature to render permanent the Dutch Government there; and being buoyed up with hopes of success, he collected a large force and attacked the city, but was repulsed with considerable loss; the Dutch pursuing their advantage threatened to invade his territory on the opposite Coast unless a treaty was entered into, to prevent any further aggression on the part of the Sultan, which was effected, and the terms of the treaty fixed a boundary as the territory of Malacca to be subject to the Dutch Government, as follows:—

On the Sea coast, from the river Lingie, to the river Calang; on the west-side by Salengore and Pahang; on the north, from Pahang to Sagamat (situated on the right bank of the Muar river) and inland from Malacca to Nanning, their dominion being considered as extending to, but not including those places. A reservation was made by the Sultan, that throughout the territory thus ceded, his name should be repeated in the public prayers according to the existing custom of the country, acknowledging him as the hereditary Lord of the Soil; which was acceded to by the Dutch. On this occasion, the inhabitants of Rumbow (an extensive province in the Malacca territory, situated intermediately between Malacca and Nanning and having several minor districts included in it) sent a deputation to the Sultan, requesting him, as they had not previously possessed a Rajah of their own, to appoint some one as their superior; accordingly the Sultan deputed DAIN CAMBORA (a Bugis by extraction) one of his ministers, to ratify the treaty on his behalf with the representative of the Dutch E. I. Company (Wm. Neckad) and strongly recommended the Government to appoint this man Rajah of Rumbow, to which they consented after concluding the Treaty.

On the demise of DAIN CAMBORA, a representation was made to the Dutch Government by the people of Rumbow, that as they together with those of Serimananti, Sungai Ojong, Johol &c. were descendants of the inhabitants of Menangkabow in the interior of Sumatra, they would prefer having a chief to govern them of their own tribe, and in accordance with their request, the Government wrote to the King of Siac in Sumatra, requesting him to send over a young Prince of the Menangkabow race, which was effected in the person of Rajah MALAWA, who arrived in 1781 and was installed Rajah of Rumbow.

To prevent any disputes arising regarding the succession to the throne, a law was passed to that effect; that it should not be hereditary in the family of the reigning Prince, but on his demise a Rajah, the next in rank of the same tribe in Menangkabow should be appointed, which person should produce a testimonial of his lineage, together with a confirmation of the same by the Rajah of Siac to the Government on his arrival, and should be installed through Malacca by a deputation from the Government to Rumbow. It will be here apposite to remark, that to the want of attention to this particular, after the transfer of Malacca to the British Government, may be mainly attributed the anarchy and bloodshed which have prevailed this part of the Coast for the last 10 years, and thrown insuperable obstacles in the way of all endeavours to bring forth the valuable productions of its mines of Tin and Gold, which under the Dutch Government were in so promising a condition. Had the former institutions of the Dutch in regard to their Treaties, been supported, we should not have to witness at the present date, the daily aggressions of petty chiefs, who possessing a bolder exterior than the rest of their neighbours, think fit to raise the cry of independence, and with the imposing title of Panghooloo; perhaps of a village not exceeding 40 or 50 houses in extent, and being situated in the centre of a rich mineral country, impose such taxes upon the produce of any mines worked in their vicinity, as effectually prevents more than a 3d of the former amount of produce being procured; and in several instances, too well known to need description, the kris has been resorted to, for the purpose of transferring to the blood-thirsty demi-savages the hard-earned property of the poor Chinese who are attracted to the spot, to work the mines.

On the other hand, instead of looking upon Malacca and its territory as a place of no importance, we might now have had to boast of a well organised system and equally as valuable production as that of the Dutch in Banca.

The succeeding chiefs of Rumbow were Rajah ADIL and Rajah ITAM; the latter having arrived in 1796 and died in 1806; and in 1807 LISGAN LOHAN arrived and reigned until 1821. On his decease, ALI the son of the former Rajah (ITAM) usurped the throne, in opposition to the law passed to preserve the proper succession; and on the arrival of Rajah LABOO from Menangkabow in 1826; the place being transferred to the English, and the former mode of installing the chief by document from the Government of Malacca not being observed, the influence of ALI with the people of Rumbow secured him a majority, which induced him to oppose LABOO in his claims to the throne, who finding himself unsupported by the Government and unable in consequence to cope with ALI, went to Serimananti at the invitation of the people of that place and became Chief, unacknowledged by either the Government of Malacca, or the chief of Rumbow of which province it had previously formed a district.

In 1830, Rajah LABOO was driven away from Serimananti by Rajah ALI, and giving up all hopes of being able to establish himself at Rumbow, and being in distressed circumstances, he was enabled, through the kindness of a friend at Malacca, to return to Siac.

On the 20th Jany. 1832, a treaty of Friendship was made with Rajah ALI as Panghooloo of Rumbow, and on the 13th September, he was made Rajah Besar and his son-in-law, SEYD SABAN, Rajah Moudan, which proceeding on the part of Government, in recognising an usurper as the Chief of Rumbow, gave the sons of the former Menangkabow princes an equal, or rather a prior claim to the throne.

On the 9th January a boundary treaty was made with Raja ALI, and SEYD SABAN, which gave back to them the territory of Rumbow and its dependencies; the consequence of which was, repeated attempts by KODIN a son of the former Rajah LISGAN LOHAN to dispossess Rajah ALI and

SEYD SABAN of the territory given up to them by the Government of the Straits, to which he considered himself entitled, and which he succeeded in effecting in September 1836, by driving out SEYD SABAN, who had the active part of the Government of Rumbow to perform, and who has since on several occasions, solicited the aid of Government to reinstate him, being the acknowledged chief of Rumbow in conjunction with Rajah ALI, according to the Treaty of 1833.

The principal sites of the Tin mines are *Soongie Ojong*. The quantity produced at this place is about 3,000 piculs annually, which employs 300 Chinese and Malays from the surrounding country, who pay Dollars 6 for each mine opened, to the Kolana Pter. From 1811 to 1823 the annual produce of the mines in this district was 6 to 7,000 piculs worked by 800 Chinese, but in consequence of a quarrel with the Malays, about 400 Chinese were killed, and those who did not effect their escape were obliged to become Mahomedans.

Contracts for working the mines are made with the Kolana who guarantees safety of person to the Chinese, and there are now about 300 employed, the disturbed state of the country prevents any addition being made to this number.

*Serimananti*. The mines of Planghi situated in this district yield about 500 piculs of Tin annually, worked by 100 Chinese who pay a duty to the Panghooloo.

*Guyong Peidas, Penadie and Ulur Rumbow*; at the whole of these places Tin has been found in considerable quantities, and in some parts extremely rich in ore, but the quantity produced is very trifling, owing to the interference of the petty chiefs who object to the opening of new mines; the water from those already in operation, they state, spoils their paddy Sawahs:—A canal half a mile in length would effectually prevent any water from the mines encroaching upon their paddy Sawahs, but their apathy and indolent disposition prevent all attempts being made which would be of benefit even to themselves.

*Johol* also produces Tin in small quantities, but a stream called *Reckan*, in this district produces 40 to 50 cattiees of Gold dust annually having 200 Chinese workmen.

*Gaminchie* formerly tributary to Nanning but transfer'd to Johol in January 1833 produces Gold from two mountains called *Chindera* and *Tannan* there are 600 Malays employed and the quantity produced is about 70 cattiees annually.

*Jeliloo*, a place near *Soongie Ojong* produces Tin and Gold worked entirely by the *Jacans* a race of aborigines.

The foregoing places possess a population as follows.

	Houses	Inhabitants.
Soongie Ojong .....	300	1,400
Serimananti Jerarpis		
Poonoog Passier and Jempool under the Panghooloo of Serimananti.....	2,000	9,000
Rumbow .....	2,000	9,000
Johol and Gaminchie.....	400	1,600
Jeliloo .....	700	2,900

The whole of these places were included in the Treaty with the Dutch and considered a part of the Malacca territory, but on the transfer of the place to the English, & the subsequent treaty making *Rumbow* independent, the smaller districts, as mentioned in the foregoing statement, also considered themselves entitled to the same privilege—altho' the native chiefs have on several occasions applied to the Malacca authorities to know what their line of proceeding should be during the disturbed state of the country attendant on the expulsion of Seid Saban from *Rumbow* in the event of their being annoyed by either party; thus shewing that notwithstanding the power of independent government with which they invested themselves, they still considered the Government of Malacca as their protectors, which no subsequent act of that Government has led to annul.

It would be difficult to assign a proper reason for a territory so rich in its internal resources having been given up to the arbitrary rule of a Malayan despot, whose claims of sovereignty were not valid, and liable to be disputed by those who with claims, founded on the old institutions of the country considered themselves more entitled to it than the recognised chief of Government, which in all justice they were, and it would be uncharitable to surmise, that the cause for such proceeding on the part of Government was the result which has transpired (which any one acquainted with the Malayan character could easily have anticipated)—Pure philanthropy speaks against this as being the cause, nor could it be the utter incapability of the place to produce any thing worth directing the attention of Government to—what has already been advanced, shewing the value of its productions anterior to its coming under British rule, at once disproves the latter supposition; consequently, as a last resource it must be attributed to the entire absence of all knowledge of this part of the country to the three existing heads of Govt. in the Straits, which is much to be regretted, especially as the supreme Government (ever anxious to derive a revenue even from the produce of a few fruit trees) has of late sent down a commissioner to regulate the taxes upon land, who might have been more advantageously employed in ascertaining the extent of the resources now pointed out—and, by directing his attention to the disposition of the most influential Malay chiefs, devise such means as would procure for them a settled form of Government under the control of the British authorities in the Straits, & thereby dispense a blessing to the inhabitants, and effect that protection to the speculator, which under present circumstances does not exist, and is so essential to the improvement of the country in every point of view.