

**SIR JAMES BROOKE AND HIS GOVERNMENT AT SARAWAK.**—At a meeting of the Lambeth branch of the Society for Propagating the Gospel, held last evening, Sir James Brooke was present, and after a lecture by the Rev. T. F. Stooks, on the Borneo Mission, his excellency addressed the meeting at considerable length. He set out with the candid avowal that he disliked public meetings, that he was not accustomed to them, and was always afraid of saying more than he ought. If Christianity, he observed, was to be introduced into Borneo, it must be done in a Christian spirit, or they did not want it at all. If any particular church, as the church of England, was introduced toleration was as much as it had a right to expect amongst a heathen people. If they required a bishop there, that was the very simplest matter of discipline in the church of England—clergy without a bishop were like a regiment without a colonel. But if the Christian religion became in Sarawak a religion of division and uncharitableness, he hoped it might leave the country. Christian people should always consider how they approached a Mohammedan or Hindoo population; for undue zeal might beget undue zeal in opposition to it. There was but one way, that of mild persuasion, to convince this people; and it was in the hands of God whether it should be to-morrow or a thousand years hence. They must watch the Christian community; for history showed that Christians in a distant land did not always preserve that unity and Christian spirit which they ought to do. When he went to Borneo, he found bad government: the very bonds of society were loosened; crime walking abroad; rapine, piracy, oppression—everything that happily was unknown in England. He had no fixed plan, no deep design; he had no design at all: it was thrown in his way, and he followed the path before him. He struggled with difficulty after difficulty, not knowing what the morrow would bring forth; but gradually light came out of darkness. He found certain laws and customs existing; above all, a generous, high-minded population, willing to be improved. They were constantly applying to him as their protector, though they were in fact his protectors. He taught them only to use their arms in defence of their rights, and thus were the rudiments of justice attained. Then they instituted a court—the simplest in the world. They all met at a round table; every person of respectability, English and native, sat down at that table; the prisoner sat on a mat; the trial went on, every person being at liberty to speak; and the decision was given and recorded at the time. All the proceedings were in the Malay language; every native knew what was going forward; and they often took the deepest interest in the cases. Though lacking European culture, the natives were not at all inferior to us in mental capacity; in fact, as far as he could judge, their minds were quite equal to those of Europeans. When he wished to alter a law which was inapplicable, or cruel, or too lenient, he called the people together in open court, and explained the proposed change; he then directed the several chiefs to call the people together in their own towns, and consult as to what were the best laws for the country; and he received their determination. It was, as far as possible, self-government. He had always found them a noble and highly independent people, and most truthful and generous. This was true of the better class of both Malays and Dyaks. But they would bear no oppression; they always wore daggers by their sides, and were as ready to use them as an Englishman to use his fists. They would bear nothing in the shape of an insult. By acting on this principle their native rajahs easily ruled them, without even possessing their confidence; and that had been a lesson to him which he had followed ever since. Whenever a man was accused of any crime, even of murder, though he might not be of good character, he was not taken into custody, nor was any insult put upon his feelings; he was simply pledged to appear and take his trial at the next court. His Excellency related an interesting instance of this. The proceedings of the courts were most simple. There was very little writing; but he hoped good substantial justice was done. The courts were composed of a certain number of English gentlemen, mingled with a certain number of natives, who together formed a judge and jury, or rather, the functions of the two were combined. The institution had gradually spread, though, beyond the province of Sarawak, he had no power or jurisdiction, but was limited to offering advice when it was asked. There was always the element of piracy to guard against; though that he hoped was at an end; still there were a number of governments that would demoralise Sarawak, if they had the power. But they had no such power; and the question was, whether we might not in future apply the same development that had been applied to Sarawak to the other rivers along the coast.