

THE GROWTH OF EMPIRE.

"To HIM THAT hath shall be given, and from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath." Paradoxical and unjust as this rule appears, it is of almost universal application, and in no department of human affairs is it more frequently illustrated than in the government of nations and the establishment of Empires. Not only in ancient times, but in the nineteenth century, the tendency reveals itself in every continent of the world. A great Empire seems to attract by the power of gravitation the smaller fragments of dominion which are scattered throughout the world, and the aggregation of these particles of kingdoms continually tend to extend the boundaries and stretch the frontiers of any Empire which shows itself strong and able to govern. We have frequently observed that this tendency is almost irresistible, for the process suffers no check by the opposition of those within the Empire to the increase of their responsibilities. It seems as if we might as well file protests against the shower of meteors which strike the surrounding atmosphere of our planet, as object to the perpetual addition of bits of territory to our already colossal Empire. Englishmen have tabled resolutions in favour of contracting instead of expanding our frontiers; they have denounced the growth of their Empire; they have lamented in pathetic terms the oppressive weight of their Imperial responsibilities; but still remorseless fate heaps on islands, tribes, and kingdoms, until we ask in astonishment whether or not it is intended that England is to be the Atlas upon whose shoulders the world will rest? This year is but young; yet it has already witnessed three accessions to the territory under our control. On the Gold Coast, the Ashantees have formally ceded all authority over Adansi, whose KING has sworn allegiance to our QUEEN. In distant Polynesia the Fiji archipelago has been ceded to us for the third or fourth time; and this time it will not be refused. To these, however, we have frequently adverted. It is to the third addition to our world-encompassing Empire that we turn for the moment the attention of our readers. The cession of a hundred and twenty square miles in the Malay Peninsula, and the establishment of our authority over another hundred miles of its coast, have but seldom been noticed, but they illustrate perhaps even more clearly than either of the other cases, the natural growth of a healthy Empire.

Thirty years ago a band of Chinese—these hardy Scotchmen of the Eastern world—settled in Larut, a tributary province of the Kingdom of Perak, which stretches 100 miles to the south of our province of Wellesley, in the direction of Singapore. They were attracted thither by a rich tin mine, which the Malays were too indolent to work. The great hive, called the Chinese Empire, is perpetually throwing off such industrious swarms, who settle on any fertile tract of land in the neighbourhood of Eastern China. Siam is full of them, so is Laos, so is the British settlements in the Malay Peninsula. Wherever money can be made by industry and economy, there JOHN CHINAMAN speedily establishes himself, and hence Chinese colonies spring up all over the scantily populated regions of the East. It is this habit of JOHN CHINAMAN's that has resulted in the latest extension of English authority in Asia. The first settlers on the tin mines of Larut prospered so well that their success attracted another swarm, and still another, until the first comers found themselves out-numbered by the later arrivals. They continued to live together and work together, the first comers ruling the roost, and leaving to the others but such portion of the mines as were least productive. The Chinese possess a marvellous faculty for organisation, and the first comers and the late arrivals soon formed themselves into two great clans—the first comers styling themselves the See Kwan, and the late arrivals being known as the Go Kwan. As the latter increased in numbers and in strength, they quarrelled with the former as to the division of the mines, and at last taking up arms, they drove the See Kwan and all their belongings clean away from the settlement. This was in 1862, and for ten years the late arrivals had it all their own way; but in 1872, the first comers attacked them in force and drove the usurping Go Kwan from the mines into our settlement at Penang. From that time horrible strife reigned in Larut. The two factions, the first comers and the late arrivals, worried each other like fierce bulldogs, and embroiled in their strife the potentates of Perak. The first comers threw up stockades, and invoked the aid of the RAJAH of PERAK. The late arrivals, reinforced with war junks and sepoys, secured the goodwill of the Mantri of Larut, the nominal vassal of the RAJAH, but who recognised a usurper who had seized the throne. Thus the feud of the Chinese clans became inextricably intermingled with the quarrels of the Malay Pretenders. Through the whole of 1873 the bloody strife went on. War junks were brought from Canton, and sepoys from India, by the hostile factions. Long piratical war junks, rowed by sixty oarsmen, carrying 25 armed men and a piece of cannon, crept in and out of the rivers. They swooped down upon the shipping of the enemy, burnt the ship, tortured the

crew, and gliding off to the stockades, deposited the plunder in the safe keeping of their confederates. The whole coast began to swarm with pirates. Our commerce was seriously endangered. Hostile gangs of Chinamen threatened each other in the streets of Penang, and the feud in Larut threatened to produce civil war in the province of Wellesley. Perak was in anarchy. Brigands and pirates were masters of the coasts and of the mainland. Honest traders were murdered. Neutral property was seized. Ships flying the British flag were insecure; and, at last, so insolent grew the buccaneers, that a British police-station was attacked, and a British gunboat fired upon by these reckless outlaws.

When things had come to this pass, Sir ANDREW CLARKE, the newly-appointed Governor of the Settlements, saw that, unless our own possessions were to be convulsed with the strife of the factions, and our trade driven from the seas, something decided must at once be done. He, therefore, summoned the leaders of the Chinese factions, and the Claimants to the throne of Perak, to meet him at an island lying off the river Perak. With a steam yacht and a man-of-war he repaired to the rendezvous, and found all the parties in the strife present, save the usurping RAJAH. He insisted, as a preliminary condition, for an arbitration between the Chinese factions, that they should surrender all their junks and munitions of war, and destroy their gunboats. Strange to say, the Chinese consented to that step. Twelve pirate junks were handed over, and twenty-seven cannon, one of them a Krupp six-pounder. The Chinese then bound themselves over in the sum of 50,000 dollars to keep the peace and submit all their differences to the arbitration of British Commissioners, assisted by native assessors. The same day that this bond was signed and sealed, the claims of the pretenders were disposed of. The legitimate RAJAH was restored to the throne, the usurper dismissed as an ex-Sultan on a pension, and the MUNTRI of LARUT was confirmed in his possessions. Both SULTAN and MUNTRI had proved utterly incapable of keeping the peace among their subjects. As disputes among the Chinese, unless promptly attended to, were certain to break out, they bound themselves to receive British residents at their Courts, to obey them in everything excepting matters of religion and of custom, and to pay them out of their own exchequers. The MUNTRI of LARUT was saddled with all the expense of this intervention; and a small strip of territory, infested with smugglers and robbers, twenty-five miles long and five broad, was formally ceded to the British settlement. Another strip at the mouth of the Perak was also formally made over to our representative. Thus terminated a peaceful conference, which brought to a close a fierce and bloody feud, which established peace and order over one hundred miles of the Malay Peninsula, and which made England virtually supreme over Perak and its dependency, Larut. It secured order, protected industry, suppressed piracy, arrested the effusion of blood, and established peace over a rich and fertile country—but it extended the frontiers of the Empire. Those who object to the extension of our frontiers should explain in what other way they would have secured these advantages, or even have protected Penang from falling a prey to the anarchy of Perak.