

OUR MISSION IN THE EAST.

Most gratifying intelligence reaches us from the Straits Settlements as to the happy results of Sir AND. CLARKE'S vigorous policy of intervention and annexation. Some time ago we laid before our readers a brief account of the feuds raging around our Settlements, which had compelled our Governor to assert the supremacy of our flag, to settle disputes existing beyond our boundaries, and to extend considerably the area of British territory in the Malay Peninsula. His policy, as we observed at the time, although certain to be censured by those who think that England has no mission in the world except that of producing cheap calicoes and cheaper tracts, commended itself to us as admirably fitted to procure the maximum of benefit with the minimum of expense. The extension of the civilising sovereignty of Great Britain over regions hitherto anarchic and barbarous has been one of the greatest gains of the century, and we are glad to hear of the complete success of the last experiment which we have tried in the art of annexation.

Few more striking illustrations could be desired of the benefits accruing from the fulfilment of our mission in the East than are afforded us by the experience of Sir ANDREW CLARKE, in his brief administration of the Straits Settlements. So energetically and so sagaciously has he acted that it seems by no means improbable that we shall find the whole of the Malay Peninsula forced upon us as a free gift by its inhabitants. It will be remembered that when Sir ANDREW arrived at Singapore, the coast around the settlement of Wellesley was swarming with pirates. Our ships had been attacked, peaceable merchants had been massacred, and the whole of the country about the Larut and Perak was overrun by armed bands of marauders, who, although they waged deadly war upon each other, plundered impartially the whole district. To terminate this state of bloodshed, Sir ANDREW CLARKE, burnt the piratical prahus, disarmed the pirates, compelled them to dismantle their stockades, annexed to the Empire some strips of land, and sent English officials to the Courts of Perak and of Larut, who were to have all the authority of Governors, under the modest title of Residents. By this energetic action, piracy was suppressed, order was restored, and a rich and fertile province thrown open to the enterprize of the trader. Larut, once the scene of a deadly feud between two Chinese clans, is now as quiet as if it were in the Midlands. For two long years these clans had worried each other in so dreadful a fashion that more than six thousand Chinamen had perished in the fray. During all that time industry had been paralysed, and trade suspended. The rivers were guarded by piratical junks, and lined with formidable stockades. The country was desolate. The peaceable natives had fled to a more tranquil district, and the hostile clans fought without interruption over the tin mines which they should have worked. It is but six months since Sir ANDREW CLARKE exerted the civilizing influence of the Empire, whose servant he is, and already all is changed. The wilderness has become a garden. The sword has been turned into a ploughshare, and busy hives of industry have sprung up, where but lately frowned fortified

stockades and jealously guarded camps. When Sir ANDREW CLARKE visited Larut in July, says the *Times* Correspondent, he found that "thriving villages numbering some 8,000 souls, had sprung up, roads had been opened and were in capital working order, neat gardens dotted the plain here and there, and the whole Chinese population proclaimed a holiday, and turned out *en masse* to meet and welcome their benefactor." This transformation was effected, not by commerce, for commerce had ceased to exist; not by missionaries, for they had not appeared on the scene, but by the genius of our Imperial race, and the use of authority, to restore peace and to maintain it. Sir ANDREW CLARKE, as our representative, enforced order, and Captain SPEEDY, our Resident at Larut, secured its observance. The judicious use of force has suppressed war, and anarchy, piracy, and plunder, and transformed Larut from a scene of bloodshed and incendiarism into a field of peaceful industry.

It is not alone at Larut—where we readily admit the circumstances were exceptional—that the civilizing influence of our power has made itself advantageously felt in the Peninsula. The Province of Perak was distracted by one of the feuds which unfortunately are the rule rather than the exception among the Malays. Royal chiefs ravaged each other's territory on the pretext of war, and plundered their own subjects under the pretence of taxation. Sir ANDREW compelled the rivals to submit their claims to arbitration, and insisted upon the appointment of a British Resident as Premier of Perak. Profound peace ensued. The Pretender acquiesced in the award of our Representative, and a province which had long been desolated by war was opened to the kindly influences of genial peace. European traders and explorers availed themselves of the auspicious opportunity, and travelled into the interior, where, but last year, no white man could venture without carrying his life in his hand. The reports which they have brought back more than confirm all that has been said of the marvellous riches of the Peninsula. Gold nuggets have been discovered, and auriferous quartz; veins of silver, pure as those of Nevada, have been struck, while tin, copper, and lead have been discovered in abundance. The soil which conceals these hid treasures is almost as valuable as the minerals below. Part of it is covered with a dense primeval forest, abounding in gutta percha and ebony trees, and the rest consists of fertile tracts, which only need the care of the planter to teem with immense harvests of tea, coffee, sugar, and rice. Englishmen are already applying for permission to cultivate the land, now for the first time thrown open to Western enterprize. Outside Perak things are not so pleasant. Roving RAJAS, who are mere Oriental versions of bandit chieftains, prowl like wolves through the land, destroying the fruits of the husband man's labour, and filling fertile districts with bloodshed and oppression. When a RAJAH makes a once prosperous tract of land a jungle, his claims to reign over the desolation which he has made are recognised; and from Singapore to Tennasserim, this unique method of establishing a claim to sovereignty has been resorted to, and is being resorted to in all districts outside the magic circle of English sovereignty. The happy results of admitting an Englishman

to supreme authority, as seen in Perak and in Larut, have created a profound impression in the minds of the Malays. Between Perak and Malacca lies the province of Salangore. This province, wealthy and fertile as its neighbours, has been cursed by the presence of freebooters in some districts, who have reduced its villages to ruins, have outraged its women, and have massacred its men. The chiefs and the people were helpless to resist the marauders, but seeing, by the example of Perak, the advantages which followed from British ascendancy, they have united in petitioning Sir ANDREW CLARKE to send them an Englishman to help them to govern Salangore. On the other side of the Peninsula, lies the province of Pahang. It also has petitioned for a Resident, and should Sir ANDREW CLARKE comply with their request, the whole of the Southern extremity of the Malay Peninsula will be under the authority of British representatives.

This earnest petitioning for an English Resident, who is but the representative of English Rule, is one of the most striking tributes to the excellence of that rule which it has yet received. We have annexed lands at the request of their rulers, we have invaded territories where we were hailed as deliverers by the people, but seldom or never before have rulers and people honestly and sincerely begged us to govern them. There has been no pressure put upon these chiefs, save that of circumstances. They have merely been enabled to contrast the results of their own rule and those of English rule, and they have come to the decided conclusion that the best thing they can do for themselves and for their country is to annex the Peninsula to the British Empire. They do not put it in that way, but that is what it comes to. The demand for a British Resident, contrary to whose advice they bind themselves to do nothing, is one of the most flattering testimonials to the Imperial genius of our race which we have yet received from any nation. Yet we have no doubt that it is amply deserved. By right, not of parchment, nor of bequest, but of our Empire, but by our right of eminent ability to govern. In that ordinary way, these Malays see this, and so they lay these Provinces at our feet. Whether Sir ANDREW CLARKE accept Salangore and Pahang or not, we shall treasure the proposal of their inhabit-

ants as one of the most remarkable tributes ever paid to the success of our civilising and peace-making Mission in Asia.